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## **History as a ledger reveals it: a sequel of brickmaking, a Manitowoc industry from the 1850's to about 1948. Monograph 33 1977**

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# History As A Ledger Reveals It

A sequel of BRICKMAKING, a Manitowoc Industry  
from the 1850's to about 1948

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## Editor's Note:

Monograph No. 32 had the title "Brickmaking, a Manitowoc Industry from the 1850's to about 1948." Since the publication of that monograph, Mr. Bertler found the old ledgers kept by his father. He found in the facts and figures contained in the ledgers some interesting tidbits of information which help to understand and explain the life style of these early inhabitants of Manitowoc.

Their willingness to work hard for a wage that today would be regarded as a mere pittance, and to deny themselves pleasures and leisure pursuits which today are regarded as basic needs and rights, needs to be featured in our Society publications. These people left us a heritage for which we owe them much. Can't you see in the story these people tell how proud they were of their American citizenship? America placed no limits on what they could become. This was a land of opportunity. What they made of themselves was determined by their willingness to work hard, to sacrifice much, and to turn opportunities into success stories. We see evidence of these character traits in this monograph.

Since the publication of Occupational Monograph No. 32 of the Manitowoc County Historical Society, 1977 series, which had the title, "BRICKMAKING, a Manitowoc Industry from the 1850's to about 1948," I happened to find a ledger which contained the complete financial records of my ancestors from 1882 through 1889. The records were of a partnership between Andrew Bertler, (also spelled "Andreas") who was my great grandfather, Stephan, his son and my grandfather, and Mr. Albert Winter. I believe this is the same Albert Winter who I show as a partner in the firm of Kaufman and Winter in the 1899 city directory.

In the writing of this manuscript I am spelling the names as I think they were written in the ledgers. If there are errors it is because of my inability to transcribe

from Spencerian script. As this manuscript is being written, another handicap has appeared. It is my inability to identify some of the firms and individuals named in view of the fact that I do not have access to city directories of the late years of the 19th century, here in Englewood, Florida. Neither are newspapers of the period available so that facts about weather conditions, the economy of the period, and other pertinent information can be determined. One can only make conjectures about certain facts and situations, which if all the facts were known, might have been incorrect.

After all, a ledger is only a collection of figures. I have tried to collate and interpret these figures in such a manner as to hopefully not be too pedantic. The directory for 1884 shows the firm's name as Bertler and Co., Brickmakers, although the partnership began in 1882 and was not dissolved until after 1884.

## Brickmaking in the 1880's, a Partnership

The monograph published in May 1977 has one minor error. This occurred under the picture of the employees. It should have said "George is standing in back and to the right of John. William is standing in back of George."

A few minor expense items are listed before the official partnership began on March 17, 1882. At that time each of the partners invested \$500.00. Apparently that was not enough to see them through the organization process as they each invested another \$50.00 on June 17 so their total investment was sixteen hundred and fifty dollars. It appears that the entrepreneurs, Stephan Bertler and Albert Winter, borrowed some or all of their investment from a Ferd Osterfeldt. On March 13, 1883 there are entries showing that \$151.25 cash was paid by each of them to Mr. Osterfeldt and charged against their investment. This is just a year after the commencement of business. Then on August 15, 1883

another \$155.25 was paid for them and finally on January 8, 1884 an additional \$106.25 was paid. This accounts for \$412.75. Most likely they paid the balance back by themselves and not through the partnership, or else they had a few dollars of their own at the start.

That first year, Andrew drew out \$64.25. Of this, \$50.75 was in cash, \$3.50 for bricks, \$1.50 for one-half cord of wood and \$1.50 for two loads of clay. Stephan received \$223.96 during the year and this included half a cord of wood for \$1.50. Mr. Winter drew out \$90.00 in cash and \$3.00 for wood. Throughout the years the partners bought wood against their draw. Unfortunately, the ledgers do not show if, in addition, the partners paid wages to themselves.

While entries the first year are itemized even in such amounts as 10 cents, .34, .60 etc. they do not show for what purpose the money was expended. Some small amounts could have been for postage, horseshoeing, feed, etc. The largest amount, \$150.00 on May 3, is most likely for a horse. Miscellaneous expenses amounted to \$844.93. This included \$120.00 for rent. To offset these expenses was miscellaneous income of .50 for hand labor and \$2.50 for the services of a horse, and \$134.50 for the sale of a horse. Net paid out was \$707.43. Cordwood purchased cost \$1239.03 and wages for the workmen totaled \$2452.34. In those halcyon days before federal and state income taxes, social security, unemployment and the myriad of other deductions it wasn't necessary to record the names of those now anonymous laborers, so they were lumped under the heading of "Workmen".

Apparently 1882 had an early spring for the first payday was May 6 and amounted to \$81.00. Thereafter paydays were every two weeks through October 23. Wages went as high as \$234.60 for one period and as low as \$157.75. This fluctuation was most likely due to inclement weather, when no work was done, or else a kiln of bricks was burned and overtime earned at regular wages (no

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bonuses for overtime in those days). Vacations do not enter the picture as such a thing for seasonal laborers was unheard of in those days. Furthermore, the summer time was the busy season. There was no time then for a vacation.

Brick prices were quite high, selling for \$7.50 and \$8.00 per thousand. No order was too small as shown by the entries. Amounts such as 100 bricks for \$0.75, 225 for \$1.67 are common throughout. Even smaller amounts are listed. One load of brick "pieces" sold for \$2.00. It appears that the first year was a good one for they sold 712,037 bricks for \$5056.44. Cash receipts were the investment of \$1650.00 and \$3799.46 from the sale of bricks. Expenses and partner's "draw" totaled \$4780.01. Cash on hand was \$669.45. Amounts receivable were \$1257.50 of which \$1255.05 was collected the next year. There is a discrepancy of .58 in the total bricks sold, which could come as a result of misreading a figure.

A reconciliation of the brick entries against firms and individuals and the daily ledger comes very close to the total sales figures as posted. No depreciation was ever taken nor were any values ascribed to the wood and feed, the horses, machinery or bricks on hand. Nor were any estimates given as to how many bricks they had at the end of the year.

It has to be assumed that the partnership started at an established location and with a stock in trade. The rationale for this is that over 50,000 bricks were sold that first June in business. Since the first payday was in early May, it was a physical impossibility to have made the bricks, let them cure for three weeks or more, put them in a kiln and burn them for 12 to 14 days and then to have them cooled off enough to handle them in the short span of time before the first sales. "Bertler and White" are listed as Brick-makers in 1875, (see May 1977 monograph) and it appears that there was some stock from the previous operation.

The first customer was a "Mr. Medaus" on June 13, who purchased 150 bricks for \$1.15. On June 16, a "Huebner" purchased 1450 bricks for \$10.85. The first large purchaser was O. Torrison (believe this to be the company by that name) who bought 74,500 bricks. He received a favorable price of \$7.00 per thousand. The best customer that first year was a "Mr. Mickelson" who accounted for 193,000. He, too, received a favorable price that averaged \$6.91. This is understandable since he bought over 27% of the bricks that were sold in 1882. A Mr. Hecker bought 38,000. Other

customers were Jones, Pierce, Henry Klug, John Barnes, Pankratz, H. Horstman, S. Conway, Shimnek, S. Ohlson, E. Krummheuer, B. Ertz, Maxfeld, C. Bock, Bresler, G. Meyer, N. Morse, John Nelson, P. Johnston, J. Burnet, Cizek, N. Stadler, and Koelzer and Co. Also the firm of Maxted and Newcomb purchased 55,000 bricks. These names are as spelled in the ledger. Perhaps readers will recognize some of their ancestors or relatives among these names. The names mentioned represent the majority of customers but is not a complete list. Many of the names are repeated throughout the entire history covered by the ledger. A consistency throughout is the name "Farmer". It is not a family name but rather was used as an euphemism for cash sales. There are often several entries in one day, usually for less than 1000 bricks and always cash is received at the same time, so that both sides of the ledger balance.

Apparently credit was the order of the day and was readily extended, since cash sales only amounted to \$58.80. The records show that a "Mr. Brickav" purchased 200 bricks for \$1.50 on June 28 and paid for them on July 14. On July 24, a John Bieler bought 100 bricks for .80. It is shown as an accounts receivable at the end of the year and was paid January 25, 1883. A John Shelovitz opened an account for .70 in October. It is still shown as an accounts receivable in 1886, but apparently was paid in 1887. The \$1.75 due from F. Boning was still due in 1889. At the end of 1889 there was \$179.86 due from 1888 and before. \$52.29 of this was received in 1890, so slow accounts for the past eight years amounted to only \$127.57. Of this amount, two accounts alone accounted for \$87.54, leaving a paltry \$40.03 that may have ended as bad debts. Some of this may have been paid later but records are not available. It indeed speaks well of the honesty of the people of this period that such a nominal amount may have been lost in view of the large amount of credit extended. It should be remembered that actual hard cash was not in abundance and also that there was a recession during this period of time.

### 1883

The year, 1883, started very auspiciously. Over 48,000 bricks were sold in January. Total sales were 1,032,442 and cash receipts were \$5688.92 from those sales. Another \$1255.05 was received on past due accounts. With the cash on hand January 1, this was a total income of \$7613.42. Payments to offset the income were

wages \$2388.85, expenses \$932.41, \$1762.81 for wood. Albert Winter drew \$751.36, Andrew Bertler \$250.95, "Steff" Bertler \$594.35. The large amounts by Mr. Winter and Steff reflect the \$306.50 paid for each of them to Osterfeldt. Cash on hand was \$932 and accounts receivable was \$1327.75 which \$1009.22 was paid in 1882. Andrew Bertler still had 234.80 left in investment account, but Albert Winter was overdrawn by \$297.36 and Stephen by \$267.31. Apparently whichever partner was available at the time the bricks were paid for, was allowed to keep it a "draw" if he so desired, since there are numerous entries showing customers paying their accounts to one or more of the partners and the money is shown as a "draw" in the ledger.

Expenses for 1883 are itemized. On January 11, the item of taxes reared an ugly head. \$6.55 was paid. Thereafter taxes never were less than that amount. History does indeed repeat itself! The expression "Oat-burner" is apropos to the horses at the brickyard. Over \$275.00 was paid to Schuette Bros. for this item alone. This at a time when a workman was fortunate to receive \$1.35 to \$1.50 a day for a 10 hour workday and for seasonal work. Hay, too, was expensive and the three loads purchased in February cost \$43.27. In the summer months it sold for \$8.00 to \$10.00 per load. Straw cost \$3.50 per load. It is assumed that this was for loose hay and straw. However, hay purchased from Schuette Bros. was probably baled, since they advertised "pressed" hay for sale in the 1893 plat book.

Other interesting miscellaneous expense items are several entries for postage stamps \$0.25 and other small amounts for the same item. It is too bad that great grandfather did not save them in mint condition. A handle cost .25, was paid to the express office, \$17.00 to Meyer for a wheelbarrow and truck, .50 for registering a letter, .50 for a telegram, .30 for a broom and \$20.00 for truck. \$2.35 was paid for dockage and \$40.00 for a horse. The rent for the year was \$120.00 and paid to L.A. or S.A. Wood \$22.46 was paid for coal. This coal would have been used, along with split up cordwood for the steam boiler and not for burning bricks. The amount involved was too small and there are only two such entries over the years.

Apparently it was a late spring when brickmaking started later that year. The first entry for wages is June 7 for \$133.00 and the next entry is July 3 for \$249.85. The last full week of work was November 5 when \$94.64 was paid. The



sum of \$25.21 was paid out November 15.

Until the partnership was dissolved, no wages were paid during the winter months. This is because the partners would take care of the daily chores of feeding, watering and tending to the needs of the horses. They would also load bricks. There is no indication if the price of bricks included the delivery. There is no clue as to how many horses were owned.

Later on the ledgers show that they did pay some money to have private contractors haul bricks, but the amount paid is not that great. An argument against them hauling the bricks, is that of time. First would be getting the team readied, then loading the bricks and transporting them up to three miles or more, unloading and stacking into a pile, then returning and repeating the process, often several times a day. I do not know how many bricks would have been on a load, (at least a thousand) but how many more than that a team was able to haul is only speculation at this time. It is indeed unfortunate that I did not talk to Uncle John Bertler before he died several years ago. Although he was over 90, his mind was still keen and alert and he could have answered many of the questions that now will most likely remain unanswered. If they only had one team, which is all they needed to make bricks, then they did not haul the bricks. To counter the argument there is the entry for November 10, 1887 showing that S. Hall was paid \$67.75 for 213 bushels of oats. This is the first time that the number of bushels are shown. This works out to a price of not quite .32 a bushel, which is usually considered to run 32 pounds per bushel. This will vary so the best way to buy is by the hundred-weight. Total price paid for oats alone that year was \$315.95. Based on the price paid to Mr. Hall this would be about 987 bushels, or nearly three bushels a day consumed. This is an unreasonable amount for just one team of horses. This would indicate that there were at least three or four horses, or even more. From the above, you can reach your own conclusion.

The year 1883 saw work beginning on the Turner Hall, at South 7th and Washington St. The contractor, a Mr. Greve, purchased 134,826 bricks at a price of \$6.50 per thousand. The last delivery was made October 3 and it is assumed that cold weather must have caused the job to be closed down for the winter shortly after that. Work was resumed May 21, 1884. That year 155,524 bricks were hauled to the site. The price he paid per thousand dropped

to \$5.25. Other good customers in 1883 were Mr. Stephany who bought 92,785 at \$7.00 per thousand, a Mr. Steiner with 87,000 at \$6.25, and a "Cizek" purchased \$314.88 worth at \$6.60 per thousand. A Mr. Weinfurther bought 71,000, F. Woelherth 31,300, and a Mr. Russo 33,100. That same year either a Mr. Michelin or someone in a city by that name in the state of Michigan bought 105,900 bricks. Mr. C.H. Sabin of Clintonville, Wisconsin purchased 43,600 that year and an additional 12,000 in 1884.



*Pine Street looking north. Drying sheds are seen in this picture. Belsen home is in the background. About 1936.*

#### 1884

The first customer in 1884 was the church congregation at St. Nazianz. From January 14-17, 15,552 bricks were delivered with an additional 10,400 delivered from February 5-7. Since they paid \$8.00 per thousand about \$1.00 more than usual, it is entirely possible that this was a delivered on site price. The Clark Mill Congregation did some building this year. They had an initial order of 11,500 in February, 4400 in June, 2100 on July 30, and 691 on August 2.

Their price was \$7.50. By contrast. St. Boniface at Manitowoc purchased 6925 bricks and only paid \$5.50 per thousand. Cook, Brown & Co. of Oshkosh purchased 30,000, and a Mr. Lord of Antigo bought 11 thousand. On August 1, 4000 were sold to the Schooner "Mason".

Financially, 1884 was not a success. Money must have been tight. Only \$3263.22 was received for sales that year. Total sales were \$4744.47 of which \$136.82 were cash sales. In 1883, cash sales were \$112.50. There were 771,548 bricks sold and as was pointed out earlier, the price had dropped. Accounts receivable went up to \$1478.64. Illustrative of the hard times is the case of Mr. Weinfurther who had a balance due of \$161.54 at the end of 1883, paid off \$48.00 in 1884 and finally on December 15, 1885 paid the balance of \$113.50 (one cent short). Incidentally there is no record of interest ever being charged on past due accounts.

The balance sheet for December 31, 1884 shows cash on hand on January 1 of \$932.69, cash received from sales \$3263.22 and cash from past due accounts, \$1009.22. Miscellaneous expenses amounted to \$716.08, wages \$1502.56, wood \$1358.34, draw for Steff Bertler \$339.85, Al Winter \$358.14, and Andrew Bertler \$171.15. Total paid out \$4446.12, cash on hand \$759.01. Labor that year had dropped by \$886.29, wood by \$404.47 and other expenses went down to \$716.08. Andrew still had \$63.65 due from his original investment, Albert was overdrawn \$652.50, and Stephen was overdrawn by \$607.16.

The principal expenses that year were the usual feed bills, plus the cost of a horse from O. Torrison at \$115.50. Partially offsetting this cost was \$24.50 received for a horse, \$20.00 on November 25, "balance for a horse". It is not clear if this money was for one or two horses. I am inclined to think it was for one horse in view of the price they paid for the new horse. On December 11 they paid \$56.00 for a wagon from S. Hanson. Taxes soared up to \$8.33 that year.

Apparently Andrew must have done some farming also, as there are several entries showing that he sold hay to the partnership at the same price they paid other suppliers. In December he received \$49.50 for hay. The small amount that he drew out of the partnership up to this time would indicate that he had other income or else was substantially well off.

In July, the Schooner "Ellen Stevenson" sold 21 cords of wood to the company for \$42.00. It picked up a cargo of 6,000 bricks at \$5.50 per thousand, or \$33.00 and received \$9.00 cash in addition. The Captain probably only paid \$1.00 per cord for this wood when he loaded it up north and made a fast \$21.00 for use of his ship and one or two sailors. Then he most likely sold the bricks in Milwaukee or some other port or even back in the city where he picked up the wood, for \$8.00 or so per thousand. Then he would pick up another cargo and keep this up. The vessel as was typical of most of these coastal schooners in those days did not have too much cargo room. The 21 cords (4x4x8) would take up 2688 cubic feet or a space 8 feet high by 16 feet wide by 18.66 feet long. All in all, it was a great deal less than a boxcar would carry, although a boat was cheaper transportation.

Indications are that that year brick-making got off to a poor start as the first payday was May 31 and for \$147.25. This was a typical payday for that season. The amount of \$310.46 was paid September 9. Most likely they burned



bricks at that time. From then until November 8, only \$147.07 was paid for labor.



View from 6th and Waldo Blvd., looking southwest. Tunnel under guard rails in center of picture, (see arrow). About 1936.

## 1885

This year the accounting goes from January 1 to October 6. The firm of Goetzler and Co. purchased 380,400 bricks at a cost of \$2050.92. It is also the year that Plumb and Nelson had a big building project which took 113,600 bricks. W. Greve who ordered the bricks for the Turner Hall in 1883-84 bought 42,000. It is not shown if this was for the Turner Hall or for some other job. Miscellaneous expenses this year were \$690.87, labor \$1767.47, wood \$1171.57, S. Bertler \$400.51, Albert Winter \$404.51, and Andrew \$525.35. Rent was still \$120.00 per year, the same as in 1882. Cash sales were only \$63.55 and the price was \$6 to \$7.00 per thousand. Money received for sales this year amounted to \$3737.28 and cash received on old accounts was \$1391.00. Accounts receivable reached \$2632.42. A record of 1,157,865 bricks were sold up to October 6. Actually another 146,680 bricks were sold from then until January 1, 1886, which means a total of 1,304,505 bricks sold. A remarkable achievement considering the machinery and work force. It was also a short season, only about five months, with the first payday being on June 1 and the last one October 14.

This was also the year that the partnership broke up. No reason is given nor is any surmised. From the start of the partnership in 1882 until October 1885, Albert Winter received back his original investment of \$550.00 plus an additional \$1057.00 in cash and kind. On October 19, he received \$1354.88 in cash and a note for \$700.00 for interest in the partnership. On January 15, 1886 this note was paid in full. Thus his original investment increased from \$550.00 to \$3661.88. This is accounted for by the original amount that he withdrew, plus the \$1057.00 he was overdrawn plus the

\$2054.88 he received at the time of departing. If he needed the money is not known. This was a considerable amount for those days and yet the payroll records show that he was an employee from 1887 through 1892. He worked the entire season and his pay was only \$1.35 per day. The records did not record the names of the employees before 1887, so it is not known if he worked there in 1886.

Simple bookkeeping shows that of the \$808.38 cash on hand, Andrew was entitled to \$649.88, Stephan \$103.91 and Albert \$54.58. Thus each would have earned \$1111.58 on their investment. They would each be entitled to \$956.20 for the share of accounts receivable and a one-third share of the bricks in inventory. Trying to place it into perspective, since he received more than \$1000.00 over his share of cash and accounts receivable, his share of bricks would have been around 190,000, based on the prevailing selling price. Multiply this number by three, the number of partners and there had to be an inventory of about 600,000. Plus there had to be an inventory of at least 200,000 bricks when the partnership started. It is very doubtful if there were that many bricks on hand, considering the short season in 1885. No depreciation was ever taken, nor were any capital improvements made, and all current expenses were paid as incurred. Thus it appears, in retrospect, that a fair price was paid for his share. The law firm of Nash & Nash was paid \$15.00 in December and it was probably for services in connection with dissolving the partnership.

This is the first winter that wages were paid to an employee. August Becker earned \$141.28 from November 1 to April 6. Most likely he took the place of Albert Winter. It must be remembered that at all times this was a working partnership with all partners putting in equal amounts of time. From the amount of wages that Mr. Becker received it can be seen that the partners actually earned as wages most of the income they received. In other words, they did not just sit in an office and hire someone else to do the work.

Hay was expensive this year, one load costing \$17.30. Later in the season it dropped to a more normal price. I. Windiate received money for dockage. The amount of .45 was spent for lantern glasses and parts. A horse was purchased in April for \$36.00. There is no mention of selling a horse, so they probably traded one in. Some wheelbarrows and molds cost \$26.00. Andreas Rank apparently was a reliable blacksmith for he did much

of their work. That year he received \$31.05 for his services.

## 1886

January 18 through the 26 saw 30,000 bricks being sold to the School District Number three (probably the Adams School) at \$5.12½ per thousand. Payment was received July 18. On February 18, 24,000 bricks were sold to School District Number Five at the same price. Bricks were selling around \$5.25 to \$5.50 per thousand at the start of the year. By the end they were selling for \$5.50 to \$6.00. 884,275 bricks were sold this year. The balance sheet as of April shows a cash balance of \$1043.40 after paying off Albert Winter. The December balance sheet shows a balance of \$1440.91 cash. By this time A. Bertler Esquire was overdrawn by \$712.04 and Bertler, Esquire was \$1307.60 overdrawn. Outstanding accounts due were \$1262.00, of which \$786.65 was received by April 1887. Expenses of \$7.50 for a trip to Milwaukee was paid on March 18. Hay was expensive, costing around \$14.00 per load. Wagons were purchased or repaired in August for \$7.65. Rent was again \$120.00 for the year. Someone erred in the cash sale by .07. On April 20, a horse was purchased for \$45.00 from W. Blockman. On August 26, a horse was sold to Hoeltzer for \$20.00. He paid \$10.00 on this purchase on September 30. The record does not show if they ever received the balance. On April 16 some nails were purchased for .18.

This year, too, there may have been a new bookkeeper, as he (she) posted some cash payments for Stephan to wages, but they were later amended and posted to his investment account. Thus it would appear that they did not pay wages to themselves.

## 1887

From December 1, 1886 to April 2, 1887, 623,160 bricks were sold for \$3491.49. August Becker worked this winter and earned \$60.06. For the year his earnings were \$250.67. On June 25 a horse was purchased for \$20.00, but the old one was sold for \$15.00. Some money was paid to private haulers for hauling bricks this year. Usual dockage and blacksmithing expenses were paid, as well as feed bills. Rent still remained at \$120.00. However, taxes had skyrocketed to \$21.94. In just four years taxes had more than tripled. History teaches us that government and taxes go on forever.

On July 2 an axe was bought for \$1.00. This represents two-thirds of the income of a working man for a 10-hour day. Translated into today's prices, with



laborer earning \$6.00 per hour, such an item would cost at least \$32.00. (Plus sales tax) Who still wants to go back to the "good old days?"

Labor that year was \$1376.57. Stephan drew \$395.35 and Andrew \$882.43. Thus their investment was evened out at \$1838.77 each over their investment. They took in \$8073.52 from the sale of bricks and accounts receivable. The year's end found them in excellent financial condition with a cash reserve of \$4659.42. There were accounts due in the amount of \$1847.87.

Sales from April 26 to December 6 were 1,338,615 bricks which with the 632,160 sold from December 1 to April 26, totaled a staggering 1,961,775. Truly it was their best year. A big boom was in the making. C. Sullivan apparently wanted to be sure that he could rely on getting brick that year for he paid \$200.00 in advance to show that he meant business. By April 14, his orders amounted to a quarter million bricks, which he paid for, and he then also ordered another 40,000 bricks. Frank Drew purchased 384,500 and J. Johnson bought 231,500. O. Torrison bought 59 thousand. This year also saw bricks delivered to St. Boniface for a school house. In all, 66,525 bricks went there. Cash sales were down to \$63.00. This year the Schooner "Lydia" made four trips with a total cargo of 84,800 bricks. The Schooner "Mamer" made two trips, each with 20,000 bricks. In August the Schooner "Hall" loaded 9500 and in October another 6250. The firm of Mueller and Ackerman took delivery of 150,000 bricks and F.M. Peters purchased 56,775.

## 1888

In February 1887, some money was expended for repairs to the brick molds. The chances are that by the end of that year the molds and equipment were pretty well worn out or else the father-son team talked themselves into a new machine. Whatever the reason a new machine was purchased. It was delivered in April and the freight bill was \$56.87. The machine, purchased from J.W. Penfield and Son Co. cost \$1000.00 and was paid for in July. Additional parts and equipment were bought locally from H.C. Richards Ironworks. On August 11, 1888 they were paid \$500.00 with another \$337.29 paid on September 8 and \$91.00 worth of bricks delivered to them. The new equipment must have been eagerly awaited and preparations made for its immediate installation and operation for the brickmaking season opened in the middle of May and lasted until Novem-

ber. Wages were up to an average of \$240.00 for a two week pay period.

On February 18, \$1.45 was expended for a telegram. This may have been the order for the machinery. Dockage this year was \$15.75. On June 10, a doctor bill for \$10.00 was paid for a Mr. Tilson. Apparently he was injured at work and it must have been serious to run that high. On September 15, J. Boecher, wagon-maker, was paid \$35.10. On April 3, J. Colins received a \$4.75 discount which was unusual up to this time. In October, Russo received a .20 discount and on November 23, \$2.00 was charged to expenses for "righting a contract". Bricks had gone up in price to \$6.50, \$7.00 and \$8.00. By January 30, 26000 bricks had been delivered to Cooperstown School Number Five at a price of \$6.50 per thousand.

The Steamer "Grace Williams" loaded 15,000 bricks on August 15. The Schooner "Mariner" picked up 23 thousand and on September 15, the Schooner "Bock" picked up 40,000. That year Frank Drew purchased 446,200 bricks in October and in February partially settled up the account as follows: Received by a horse \$30.00. Cash \$16.20.

In the fall, the Shannon Waterworks bought 174,000, bricks. A total of 1,197,735 were sold. Mr. Becker earned \$260.28 that year. Total labor was \$2930.93. Stephan took out \$588.25 and Andrew \$588.25. Accounts receivable was \$1757.74. Cash on hand was \$3586.63 after the extraordinary expense of new equipment.

## 1889

This is the last year that such detailed records are available. Sales again topped the million mark, 1,062,583 to be exact. \$4279.47 was received from sales and \$1578.47 for accounts receivable. Miscellaneous expenses were \$1019.82, which included the purchase of a horse for \$155.00 from J. Koemaer, labor \$2734.87, wood \$2034.87, Steve Bertler \$357.28 and Andrew \$45.45. Rent was still \$120.00 which is what it was back in 1882.

Cash on hand was \$3248.51. Stephan drew out \$2784.30 from 1882 through 1889 in addition to his investment of \$550.00. Andrew took out \$2472.47 and his investment. They had purchased and paid for \$2000.00 in machinery, had \$3248.51 cash on hand, \$2167.31 on accounts receivable and perhaps an inventory of around 500,000 bricks, worth about \$2500.00 and no unpaid bills. This means they earned about \$6000.00 each in eight years or over \$825.00 per year. However, if you

compare this amount with the \$3100 plus what Albert Winter received for four years work back in 1885, it is readily apparent that he received a very fair price, since the best years of the company came after the split between the three partners. Also, once Mr. Winter left, it was only necessary to split two ways instead of three. In January 1889, 150,000 bricks were delivered to Silver Lake Convent at a price of \$5.75 per thousand. In July and August another 46,900 were sold at a cost of \$5.25 per thousand. C. Seegar purchased 98,300 from March through June 5. On January 30, 1890 he gave the partners a note for \$500.00 and on February 20, he gave them \$95.80 cash. The Schooner "Mariner" picked up eight loads of bricks, totaling 650,000. The Schooner "Bock" made two trips for a total of 44,000. The Steamer "Grace Williams" loaded 10,225 in two loads and the Schooner "Lydia" picked up 9700. From the number of bricks picked by these vessels it can be seen that their cargo capacity was not too great. As implied previously, these vessels were not too large.

Mrs. Williams must have built her famous Williams House (or hotel at South 8th and Franklin St.) that year for she bought bricks. The Trustees of the Catholic Church of Shawano purchased 52,000 at \$8.00 in May and June. On August 20, they gave the company a note for \$416.00. It is carried as an account receivable at the end of the year. On August 22, 1890 they received another note for the same amount, to replace the previous one. No interest was added. Apparently they must have had a difficult time to raise money to build a church, and the Bertlers carried them. Mr. Mickelson who was mentioned very early bought 10,000. W.M. Rahr & Sons purchased 55,000.

By the end of 1889, times were getting tough. The going price for bricks was down to \$5.25. Oats were selling for .27 per bushel and hay was down to \$7.00 - \$8.00 per load. Taxes in the amount of \$23.16 were paid.

As mentioned in the first monograph, several brickmakers must have gotten together to make bricks on shares in 1890. Expenses and draws are not shown. Some of the larger accounts that year were Manitowoc Manufacturing Co. with about 100,000, Wm. Rahr & Sons, C. Bressler, V. Goetzler, K.G. Nyhagen, A. Rank and H. Boettcher.

In 1891, 75,000 bricks were sold to Reedsville. (School?) E. Hamilton bought 229,000, A. Schleisleder bought 40,000, V. Chizek & Co. 53,000, J. Wolf 20,000,



Rahr & Sons 82,000, and a "Fox" for sewers, over 63,000. Adding these totals one gets more than the 400,375 I reported sold in 1891 and 321,5000 bricks were sold by March 10. I did not have the older ledger available at the time I wrote that article, so was unable to determine relationship of the various dates.

The bookkeeping from 1890 on is insufficient to make any accurate conclusions. However names of employees were shown, so some are listed here. A. Sizky, A. Winter, (former partner) J. Schmidt, A. Wazinske, J. Sizkee, G. Karl, Steffen, J. Girke, A. Waber, Budish, D. Schmidt, A. Schmidt, J. Marodick, J. Jorge, J. Sizkozke, A. Maroedick, M. Wansske, A. France, Krokoske, Sinzime, J. Vnuk, J. Rhine, E. Fricke, Pap, C. Rutherford, J. Betka, Jos. Freighbosch, A. Tetek, Schultz, J. Andrsk, W. Groll, J. Vogt, Jos. Schlager, Jorge Kapuizt, A. Gilbert, W. Fricke, Glomski, C. Fricke, F. Engls A. Kuekne, Wilke, J. Tadick, J. Gerick, A. Morotec, Disperjanec, J. Vunck, M. Sadoske, Jos. Korborshe, H. Holtorf, J. Plotke, W. Rank, Jos. Jarnick, A. Sickmond, and Gor Sense. Apparently the bookkeeper used phonetic spelling for many of the names, for there are several different versions of the same name.

### Wood

Cordwood was a large and constant expense throughout the years. Perhaps one reason so much of it was used is because the boiler had to be kept fired up. In the 1880's most of it was bought locally, although some was shipped in by boat. The most it cost was \$2.25 per cord and the price dropped to as low as \$1.12½. Each cord of wood represented many long, hard hours of labor. Wood was usually cut and delivered in the winter months, when no other activity produced any hard cash. It is surmised that most of the wood was purchased from farmers. The farmer would do his daily chores, then head out to the woodlot with any children and other members of the household capable of helping him, along with a team of horses and a chain. Using axes and/or two-man saws, the trees would be felled, the branches chopped off, and the trunk cut into four foot sections. These sections would then be split in half and sometimes quartered. This would be accomplished by driving steel wedges in one end of the log with a heavy maul and then progressing down to the other end with additional wedges. The smaller branches and upper part of the tree trunk would be cut and split into suitable lengths for the kitchen stove. These stoves were used for heating the house and the hot water reservoir, as well as for

baking and cooking. Any branches or parts unsuitable for stove or cordwood would be put into a large brush pile, which would be burned after it had dried for several months. When the tree was cut down, the chain would be tied around it and the team would then snake it over the frozen ground to where the wood was split.

One reason that cordwood was so reasonable in price, is that almost every farm had a wood lot and in order to till more land they had to clear the land. Prices per cord for cordwood are not shown for 1882. In 1883 the price was as high as \$2.25 per cord and it appears that about 775 to 800 cords of wood were purchased. In 1884 the price dropped to around \$1.75 and about 725 cords were bought. In 1885 much wood was purchased at \$1.25 and it appears that about 1000 cords were used. In 1886, about 600 cords were bought and in 1887 there was about 800 purchased. In 1888 the bookkeeper totaled it up and there were 890 cords bought at \$1.87½ average. In 1889 there was 1093 cords at the same price. This was the delivered price.

### Genealogy

Andreas Bertler, also known as Andrew, was born September 10, 1820 at Wiirtenburg (Scheri) Germany. His parents were Andre and Katherine Bertler. Most likely he married while still living in Germany, since his wife was also born in Germany. He (they) immigrated to the United States, arriving in New York in July 1849. He was naturalized on June 23, 1871. He died in May 1895 at the age of 74. His wife, Elizabeth was born March 29, 1819 and died May 20, 1907. She was 88 years old. The most probable cause of his (their) emigrating is the religious strife in Germany in the 1840's. Both were lifelong Catholics. For a number of years after coming to Wisconsin, they resided in Milwaukee. If they had any daughters is not known at this time, but they did have three sons. Stephan, my grandfather, John who never married and later moved to California, and Joseph who lived in Milwaukee and raised a family there. There are several of his descendants living there at this time.

Stephen (Stephan) Bertler was born May 6, 1854 at Milwaukee. He was married on February 24, 1879. They had five children, the three sons mentioned throughout, a daughter, Josephine, later Mrs. Frank Peronto and another daughter, Julia, who lived three months. Helena Guidinger Bertler died in December 1887. Stephen did remarry on February 6, 1894, this time to Caroline

Mary Griebling (Nee Wegforth). Stephen died at the age of 52, on April 11, 1907 as a result of the accident at the brick yards, as mentioned in the May monograph.

George Bertler was born December 1884 and died February 25, 1962. He was 77 years old. He was married August 5, 1908 to Johanna Engelding. She was born September 22, 1886 and died October 17, 1932 at the age of 46. They had 12 children, 11 of whom grew up to be adults. In July, 1950, George remarried, this time to the late Theresa Seidl Feil.

I am indebted to my sister Frances for her valuable assistance in securing the above genealogy.



*George Bertler standing on new machinery installed about 1910. He probably smoking "8 Brothers" tobacco which was his favorite.*

### Comments

None of my family was aware that the partnership existed in 1882 and my findings came as a complete surprise to them. From the ledger entries it is certain that the lakefront location was rented for \$120.00 per year, which included the right to take as much clay as could be processed. It has always been the thought of family members that Bertlers owned this land, but this belief has now been shown to be erroneous.

Perhaps some sailing buff will research the names of the schooners mentioned well as their size and cargo capacity. The "Gemutlichkeit" that occurred when burning bricks, as mentioned in the previous monograph, was a continuation of a custom that went back to at least 1880. The records show that on August 1885, \$2.00 was paid to Schreihardt and Kunz (Brewery) for ¼ barrel beer. On October 9, \$1.00 was paid to Rahr & Sons, and on the same date \$3.00 was paid to Kunz & Bleser. In December 1886, Rahr was paid \$4.00 and Kunz & Bleser \$2.00. On January 11, 1888 Rahr & Sons received \$2.00 and Kunz & Bleser were paid \$4.00 on January 21. On January 13, 1889, Kunz & Bleser received \$4.00 for 4/8's beer. Wm. Rahr & Sons



received \$6.00 on November 11, 1889. As was the custom, their business was divided among the merchants so that each one received a share of it.

An interesting observation is that most of these purchases were made during the colder months of the year. Unless there was a tremendous demand for bricks, the kilns were not burned until the colder months, when it was no longer possible to make bricks. Since two or three men could handle the burning of a kiln, this meant a savings in the cost of labor, as the partners could do this work themselves and at their convenience.

Although these records precede the dawn of income taxes, the cost of the beer was treated as a business expense.

It was interesting to read the recent monograph about the bank failures in the 1890's. Both my mother and father mentioned many times that the Bertlers lost quite a bit of money as a result of bank failures, but were never able to give us any details. The article, then, served to substantiate what had previously been hearsay.

At the commencement of the partnership, Andrew was already 61 years old. Stephen was 28, and the age of Albert Winter is not known. Since Andrew was listed as a brickmaker at least as far back as 1868, he most likely owned the equipment and horses. This conclusion is reached because no money was spent as a capital outlay for these items, but rather they were replaced as and when worn out.



*The electric shovel mentioned in the monograph about Brickmaking. Notice how clumsy and unwieldy it is. The ramp to the left was for the "tram" which was pulled by the "electric donkey." About 1928.*

In the fall of 1908, vandals placed two large stones in the brick machine resulting in the machine being wrecked when the power was turned on. The stones tore out the side of the machine and ruined four of the knives, according to a news article in the Herald-Times Reporter in 1958 from their "50 Years Ago" files. From the same source, on September 1, 1960, there was an article from 1910, stating that the Bertler Brick Co. was spending

between \$3000.00 and \$5000.00 for extensive changes and improvements by the installation of modern machinery and other equipment which would increase the facilities of the plant, so that with the opening of the season next spring the yard will be among the most modern in this section of the state.

My sister, Frances informs me that before the company owned a truck, it was possible to make two trips a day to Two Rivers with a team of horses hauling a load of bricks. Following the lakeshore road, this would be a roundtrip of about 10 to 12 miles, or 20 to 24 miles per day.

The C.M. Foote & Co. Platbook of 1893 for Manitowoc County, shows the location of the lakefront brickyard to be Lots 2,3, and 4, Block 51, in the City of Manitowoc. These lots are on the south side of Huron Street and to the east of Second (!) Street, presently in Lake Michigan. A quick glance at a city map today compared to that of 1893 will show that there has been considerable erosion and encroachment since that time. The E. Fricke brickyard is also shown and it is located south of Cleveland Avenue but adjoining the Little Manitowoc River to the north and Lake Michigan to the east.

Another brickyard is shown just north of Franklin Street, the railroad tracks, and the Sherman Creek on South 26th. This is probably the yards that Frank Woerfel operated. Still another brickyard is shown north of Franklin, the railroad tracks and Sherman Creek and on South 20th Street. This is the yards shown in the 1875 directory as operated by Fred F. Veith, later the Henry Boettcher yards, in 1897 the Peter Kaufman yards and in 1899 the Kaufman & Winter brickyards. This is the same Albert Winter who was a partner in Bertler & Co. back in 1882.

I Wish to thank all who have assisted me in any way with this article, either with furnishing picture(s), research, and/or proofreading.

The territorial legislature in 1883 established "The University of the Territory of Wisconsin". In the following decade little was done toward bringing the institution to life, except for selecting and reserving from sale the land gift which in August of 1848 had reached a total of 46,039 acres. In 1848 the new state constitution stated, "The matter of support or future grants were to constitute a university fund, whose control was lodged in an ex officio board created by the constitution".

## Monographs

1. A Bit About Branch — 1967
2. The Art and Science of Watch Repairing — 1967
3. The Drug Store As It Was And Is — 1967
4. Food and Its Distribution in Early Manitowoc — 1968
5. Haymaking in the Earlier Days — 1968
6. A History of Medicine in the Early Years — 1968
7. From Forest to Crop Land — 1969
8. Manitowoc County - A Leader in the Manufacture of Farm Machinery — 1969
9. Fishing in Manitowoc County — 1969
10. Food Processing, A Manitowoc Triumph — 1970
11. The Development of the Dairy Industry in Manitowoc County — 1970
12. The History of Banking in Manitowoc County — 1970
13. History of Stoelting Bros. Company of Kiel. Cheese Making Becomes a Completely Automated Process — 1971
14. A History of "Learnin' " in Manitowoc County. (Also a History of the County Training School) — 1971
15. The History of the John Schuette Family — 1971
16. Early Drugdom in Manitowoc — 1972
17. The History of Manitowoc's Secondary Schools — 1972
18. The History of Aluminum and MIRRO — 1972
19. Railroads and Railroadng in Manitowoc County — 1973
20. The German Influence in Manitowoc County — 1973
21. Opinion Molders Prominent in Manitowoc's History — 1973
22. John Nagle's History of Manitowoc County — 1974
23. A Chippewa Indian Tells the Story of Her Life — 1974
24. Ceska Slovanska Lipa Opers House — 1974
25. A Spoonful of Honey — 1975
26. Public Libraries of Manitowoc County, 1852 to Present — 1975
27. Limestone an Important and Valuable Manitowoc County Resource — 1975
28. Entertainment Tonight — 1976
29. History of the Manitowoc Fire Dept., 1851 to Present — 1976
30. Highway and Bridge Building, in Manitowoc County, 1836 to Present — 1976
31. Failure of the Bank of Manitowoc — 1977
32. Brickmaking, a Manitowoc Industry From the 1850's to About 1948 — 1977
33. History as a Ledger Reveals it ... — 1977





This picture was taken about 1890-1892 and is at the old brickyard location at the lakefront. This is evidenced by the clay bank on the right background. The heavy hardwood maul lying on the parapet along with the force marks in the claybank indicates that long steel or hardwood wedges were driven into the bank to rive it. After splitting the bank, several men would shovel the clay into a dumpwagon or scraper which a team of horses would haul to the machinery. Truly this was laborious and exhausting work.

In the photo, William Bertler is number one, George is number two, John number three and Stephen number four. George appears to be about five to seven years old, therefore the tentative dating of 1890-1892. Without positive identification, it is assumed that Stephen is number four. This is because he is the only one who is reasonably clean of clay, is wearing a vest, carrying a watch, and wearing a straw hat. It is also assumed now that he is the man to the extreme right on the picture of the employees on page four of the May monograph. There are many similarities between the two persons, allowing for about 16 years time span, the picture would have been taken shortly before his tragic death. Most of the employees are wearing almost shapeless felt hats. In addition to the Bertler boys, several of the men are barefoot. There are 19 workers in this picture and seven of these appear to be in their teens. At least five men are holding shovels, so they probably worked on the cliff. Almost all have clay-caked shoes on their feet. It is readily apparent that sartorial elegance was of no importance at a brickyard.

Unfortunately, I cannot identify any of the other persons on the picture. Photo Courtesy of Walter N. Bertler.

## MANITOWOC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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