

Alfred T. Andreas and his MINNESOTA ATLAS

WALTER W. RISTOW

THE PRODUCTION of state atlases is one of the underdeveloped branches of American cartography. Robert Mills's *Atlas of the State of South Carolina*, the first of an individual state, was published in 1825, nearly five decades after the Republic was established. Four years later the *Atlas of the State of New York* by David H. Burr was published. These two distinguished and handsome volumes were the only state atlases printed from engraved plates. A revised edition of Mills's work was published in 1838, and several revisions or reprintings of Burr's *Atlas* were issued between 1829 and 1841. No other state atlases were published until after the Civil War, but in the two decades after 1865 they were produced in great numbers. More than thirty volumes, covering some twenty-two states, were published between 1866 and 1887. New England, the Middle Atlantic region, and the Middle West were the principal centers of atlas activity.

A number of human, historical, and economic conditions favored this concentration. These areas suffered no physical destruction during the war. Industries of various kinds

which had expanded to meet wartime demands sought new opportunities and markets after the war in the rapidly settling lands of the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. Probably more immediately significant to map and atlas publishing were new techniques and equipment for reproducing and printing. Lithography, introduced into the United States in the early decades of the nineteenth century, was not widely adopted for maps until the late 1840s. By the middle of the century, however, after the introduction of zincography and the steam press, lithography had supplanted engraving for most cartographic reproduction. The making of cheap paper from wood pulp also stimulated publishing.

The prolific output of county maps in the ten years preceding the Civil War was a direct response to the application of lithography to map reproduction. Some four hundred maps, primarily of counties in the northeastern states and in Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois, were published in this decade. Virtually every county in the Middle Atlantic and New England states had been mapped by 1860. The major county map producers, from headquarters in New York and Philadelphia, had by this date also sent their surveyors into the more populous and prosperous counties of the midwestern states.

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ILLUSTRATED HISTORICAL ATLAS



LE SUEUR CO. MINN.

LAKE EMILY.

NEAR ST. PETER.

OF THE STATE OF

MINNESOTA.

PUBLISHED BY

A. C. ANDRÉAS

LAKE SIDE BUILDING CHICAGO, ILL.

1874.

Commercial map publishing, dormant during the war years, was vigorously reactivated and expanded after 1866. Postwar publishers, finding few unmapped counties in the Northeast, shifted their emphasis to state atlases. They drew heavily upon the county maps published before 1860 for data. By 1873 atlases had been published for Maryland, Delaware, Ohio, New York, Illinois, Rhode Island, Indiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Missouri, and Michigan. Most of the volumes were produced by three or four Philadelphia and New York publishing companies and were similar in format and scope. They included colored maps of the state and its counties, supplemented with text and statistical tables. Rarely did they have illustrations.

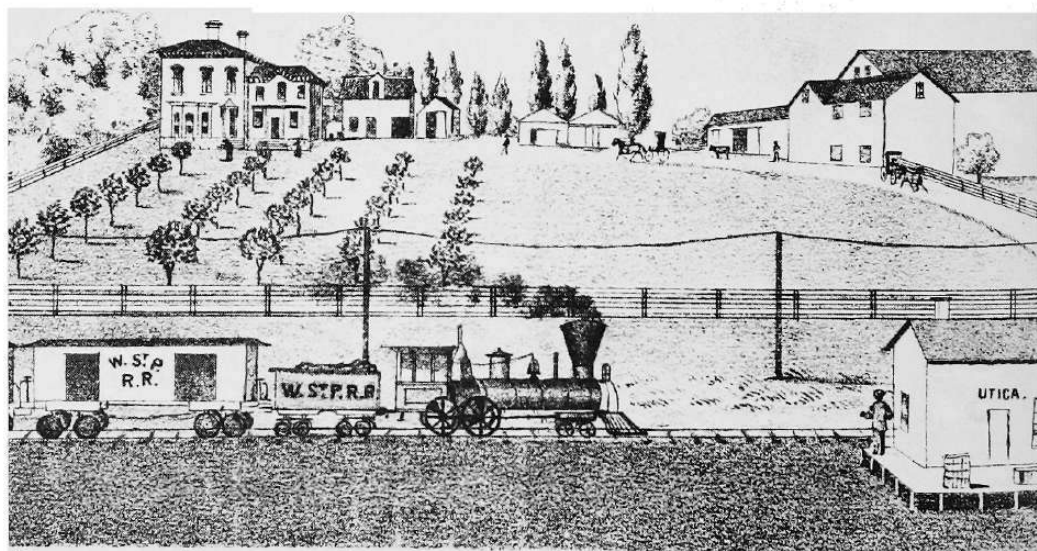
IN 1874, *An Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota* introduced a new format and pattern, as well as a new distribution policy for state atlases. The Minnesota volume was the apex in the career of its publisher, Alfred T. Andreas, one of the most prolific and successful atlas producers of the post-Civil War period. Andreas was representative of the enterprising and vigorous group of young men who revitalized the map and atlas publishing

industry during the 1860s and 1870s, principally in the new and rapidly growing states of the upper Mississippi Valley. The aggressive operational and promotional techniques of these businessmen differed radically from the practices of the established cartographic firms.

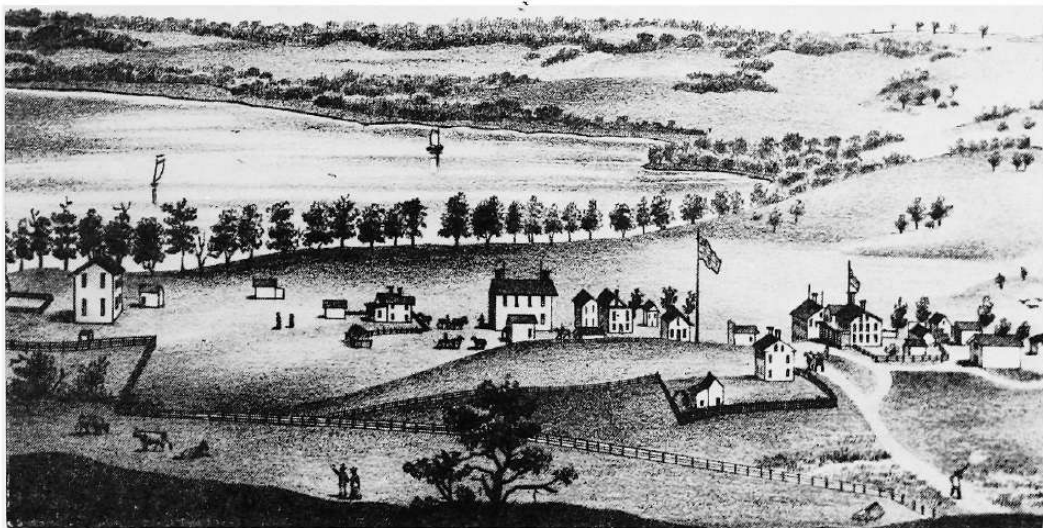
State atlas publishing, as practiced by Andreas and his midwestern contemporaries, was an extension of the highly successful county atlas business which had evolved from the active county map industry that blossomed in the immediate postwar years. In this interesting and colorful chapter of American cartographic history, Alfred T. Andreas played a prominent role. Between 1860 and 1875 he published, independently or with associates, some twenty-five county and state atlases. At least one source gives Andreas credit for originating both the illustrated county atlas and the illustrated state atlas. Unquestionably, both types of cartographic publications reached their maximum development under his direction.¹

Andreas was born May 29, 1839, in Amity,

¹Bates Harrington, "How 'Tis Done: A Thorough Ventilation of the Numerous Schemes Conducted by Wandering Canvassers Together With the Various Advertising Dodges for the Swindling of the Public, 55 (Chicago, 1879).



RESIDENCE OF BENJAMIN ELLSWORTH, UTICA STATION, UTICA TP. WINONA CO. MINN.



A View of Glenwood and Lake Whipple in Pope County

Orange County, New York. His family later moved to nearby Chester where Alfred was educated at Chester Academy. At the age of eighteen Andreas joined the westward migration and by July, 1857, located in Dubuque, Iowa, where he held clerical and teaching positions for several years. In 1860 he was employed as a teacher near Sparta, in Randolph County, Illinois, where he remained until he entered military service.²

The future cartographer enlisted as a private in Company G of the Twelfth Illinois Infantry in July, 1861. Within a year he was promoted to commissary sergeant. Through efficient handling of the many details of the job and because of his outgoing, co-operative personality, Andreas won the friendship of both officers and enlisted men in the regiment. In January, 1863, he was promoted to quartermaster of the regiment and commissioned a first lieutenant. As the war progressed so did Andreas' military career. He became division commissary for the Atlanta

campaign, first on the staff of General Thomas W. Sweeny and later with General John M. Corse. He held this rank on General William T. Sherman's "March to the Sea" as well as during the northward advance of the Union army through the Carolinas. On April 1, 1865, he was mustered out of the service at Goldsboro, North Carolina. Andreas returned to Davenport, Iowa, where he married Sophia Lyter on May 31, 1865.³

THE END of the war brought accelerated activity and prosperity to the northern states. This was particularly true for the agricultural Middle West which had profited from the high food prices during the years of conflict. The end of hostilities and the recently passed Homestead Act of 1862 also hastened western settlement, particularly in the prairie states. Farmers and town-folks had money as well as a desire for information and material goods. This rich and receptive market invited itinerant salesmen offering various products and services. In the vanguard were the county map vendors.

Before the Civil War, representatives of the eastern map publishers had advanced as

² *Memorials of Deceased Companions of the Commandery of the State of Illinois, Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States*, 493-496 (Chicago, 1901).

³ *Memorials of Deceased Companions*, 494.

far west as Iowa and Illinois. A few local surveyors had also entered the business, among them the Thompson brothers, of Geneva, Illinois, who by 1861 had published a half dozen or more maps of counties in Illinois and Iowa. Upon return to civilian status, Thomas H. Thompson, one of the brothers, re-established himself in the mapping business. In 1865 he formed a partnership with a former army associate, Louis H. Everts. Because the publishers drew heavily upon the United States land office surveys on file in all county seats, maps of midwestern counties could quickly be compiled. Thompson and Everts accordingly concentrated their efforts on securing subscriptions for their maps prior to publication date from farmers and town residents. Their solicitors combed the rural districts and secured a high percentage of orders from the prosperous landowners. Within a few years Thompson and Everts had developed a thriving business mapping counties in Illinois and Iowa.⁴

In 1867 the two publishers persuaded another former army friend, Alfred T. Andreas, to join their staff of canvassers. At first Andreas had indifferent success. In time, however, the personal qualities and industry that had brought advancement during his military career were equally effective with civilians, and he became one of Thompson and Everts' most successful salesmen. Andreas was described by a contemporary as "of good personal appearance, above the medium height, and light complexioned. He was . . . of slight frame, nervous and incessantly active; young in years, but of sufficient world experience to give him self-command. He had an open countenance, smiled easily and laughed readily. . . . His eyes were blue, frank in their gaze and sure to impress the beholder favorably. His language was good, his manner of speaking earnest, and his bearing, while in conversation, such as to enlist attention and inspire confidence. He was quick to form opinions, reach conclusions and prompt to act. . . . He had mixed with all classes of

men, and had purposely studied human nature. His aim in life was to succeed."⁵

Andreas soon visualized new sources for profit in county mapping. If the map were cut into parts by townships and these were bound in book format, he reasoned, an entirely new market would be opened up. Atlases could be sold in counties for which maps had previously been published. Moreover, an atlas could have an unlimited number of pages with illustrations and biographical sketches of prosperous farms and farmers, as well as of business establishments and leading citizens of the towns and villages. At specified rates per line of text or square inch of portrait space the income from subscriptions could be greatly augmented.⁶

Accordingly, in 1869 or 1870 Andreas resigned his position with Thompson and Everts and formed a partnership with his father-in-law as Andreas, Lyter & Company.⁷ Under this and other imprints, Andreas published atlases for a number of counties in Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, and Ohio within the next five years. The illustrated county atlas reached its zenith under his guidance. In its most complete form the atlas included a small-scale map of the county, page-size township plats, plans of towns and villages, lists of subscribers, biographical sketches, and lithographic reproductions of business establishments, public buildings, farmsteads, portraits of individual family groups, and prize livestock.

By appealing to human vanity the canvassers secured, in addition to subscriptions to the atlas, signed agreements to have published therein the biography of the subscriber, portraits of himself and family, and perhaps a panorama of his acreage. At an average cost of nine dollars per atlas (many a farmer was persuaded to order copies for his children), up to sixty dollars for a large view, and a biographical sketch at 2½ cents

⁴ Harrington, *How 'Tis Done*, 28.

⁵ Harrington, *How 'Tis Done*, 52.

⁶ Harrington, *How 'Tis Done*, 56.

⁷ Harrington, *How 'Tis Done*, 58.

per word, a subscriber might belatedly learn when the atlas was delivered that he owed the publisher a hundred dollars or more. From one county atlas, in an edition of 2,000 to 2,500 copies, the gross returns to the publisher might exceed \$35,000, almost half of which was net profit.⁸

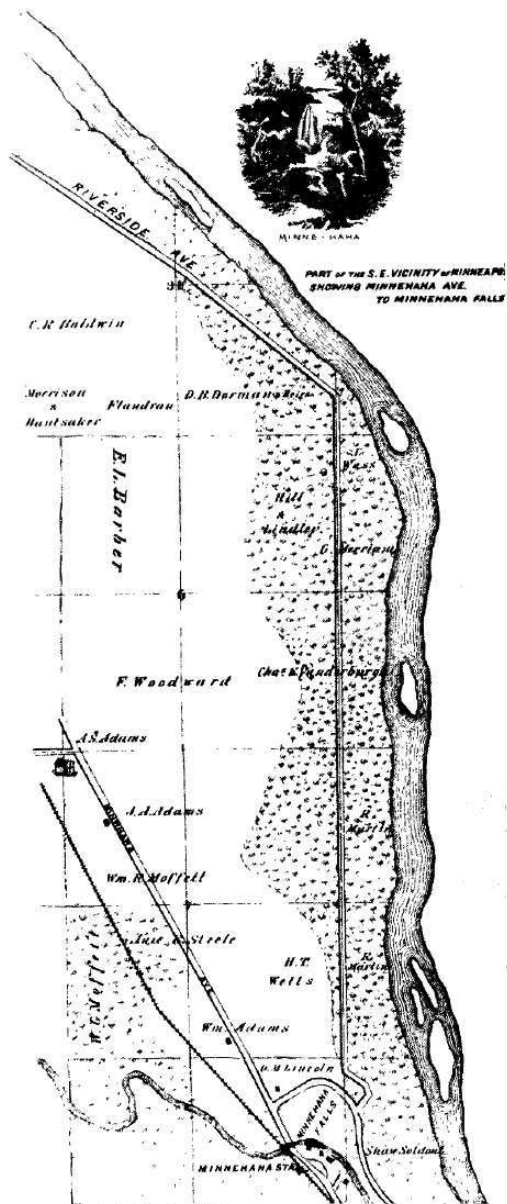
The Andreas firm had been located in Davenport, Iowa, for several years, but in 1873 it established new Chicago headquarters in the Lakeside Building, located at the corner of Clark and Adams streets.⁹ Success with county atlases moved Andreas to employ similar procedures and techniques to produce volumes for entire states. For his first state atlas he selected Minnesota. It was a daring choice. Minnesota had entered the Union only fifteen years before. Much of the state was still a wilderness, and frontier conditions prevailed even in many of the settled portions. Compilation data was almost nonexistent, for only a few counties had been mapped prior to 1873. This was, however, one of the reasons Andreas selected Minnesota, for his agents would be soliciting subscriptions in virgin territory.¹⁰

WORK on the Minnesota atlas commenced in 1873. From his new offices in Chicago, Andreas organized and directed the elaborate operation. Surveyors were soon in the field traversing the roads and drawing on their maps section and property lines, streams, railroads, towns and villages, churches, schoolhouses, quarries, and other visible features of the physical and cultural landscapes. For areas already surveyed by the United States land office, the official plats were consulted or used as bases.

⁸ Harrington, *How 'Tis Done*, 59, 69.

⁹ Alfred T. Andreas, *An Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota*, 394 (Chicago, 1874). There is a lithograph of the building with a descriptive note.

¹⁰ The Minnesota Historical Society has two maps of Ramsey County prior to 1873: one is by W. F. Duffy, 1859; the other by L. G. Bennett, 1867. Winona County was mapped in 1867 by L. G. Bennett and A. C. Smith; Hennepin County by George B. Wright in 1873.

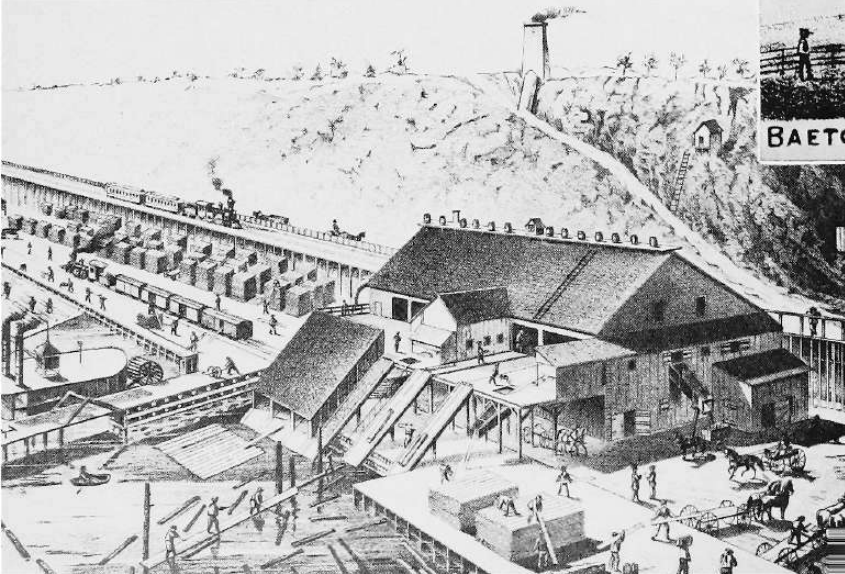
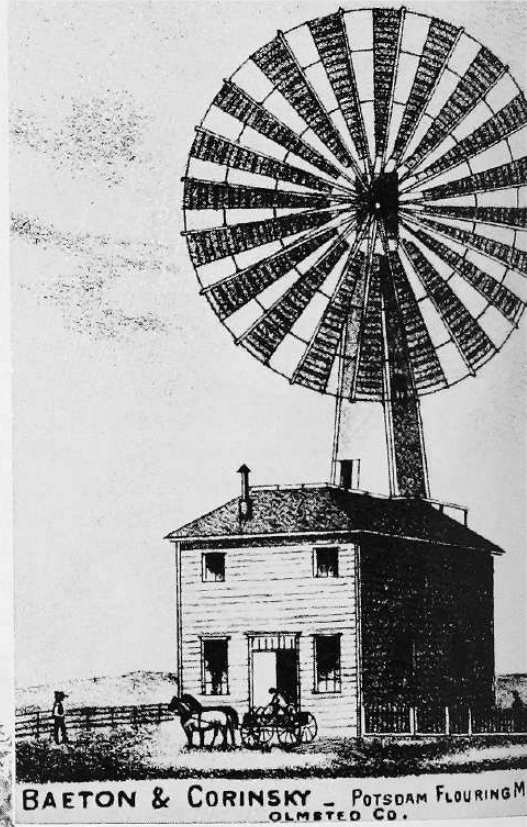


A plat showing a section of Minneapolis

Concurrent with mapping operations, the state was thoroughly worked by canvassers who solicited subscriptions and contracts for biographies, portraits, and sketches. By subscribing to the *Atlas* at a cost of fifteen dollars an individual was listed among the "patrons," and his name was also inscribed on the map at the site of his farm, along with the extent of his holdings. Agents received three dollars in commission on sales to town



GE CO. BREWERY, CHARLES GINSBERG, PROP. MANTORVILLE MINN



Typical illustrations of Minnesota industries. Above, a St. Paul marble and granite works; at the left, a lumber mill at Stillwater

residents and an additional fifty cents for farm subscriptions. A canvasser's weekly earnings ranged from twenty-five to sixty dollars.¹¹

At the height of operations more than sixty Andreas men were engaged in various activities throughout the state. This large field force was under the competent direction of Thompson, the companion-in-arms of Civil War days who had several years before introduced Andreas to the mapping business.¹²

The scope and magnitude of the project are summarized on one of the preliminary pages of the volume under the heading "What It Takes to Make a State Atlas." Lithography, printing, typesetting, coloring, and binding, the publisher notes, were done by firms "located in the LAKESIDE BUILDING [Chicago], which was erected especially for the publishing business, and particularly for the publishing of Atlases." Seventy tons

of paper and seventeen tons of cardboard (for the covers) were used to produce the Minnesota book. Names and addresses are listed for more than a hundred "persons [who were] engaged in our office and on the field work on the Minnesota State Atlas."

The cost of printing the atlas was in excess of \$200,000. The panic of 1873 made normal financing difficult and Andreas had to turn for assistance to Benjamin F. Allen, a wealthy banker who had recently moved from Des Moines, Iowa, to Chicago. When Allen's financial ventures in Illinois collapsed, Andreas reportedly lost \$130,000 and with several of his major creditors as partners was forced to reorganize as the Andreas Atlas Company.¹³ Despite these financial difficulties, the *Atlas of Minnesota* was completed on schedule and distribution to subscribers was begun in December, 1874. The wheat crop was poor that year; many farmers, pressed for cash, reneged on their contracts or offered notes in payment. Some ten thousand atlases were, however, eventually delivered to Minnesota residents.¹⁴

In the preface to the volume Andreas expressed, with obvious feeling, "the sense of relief we feel from the responsibilities which

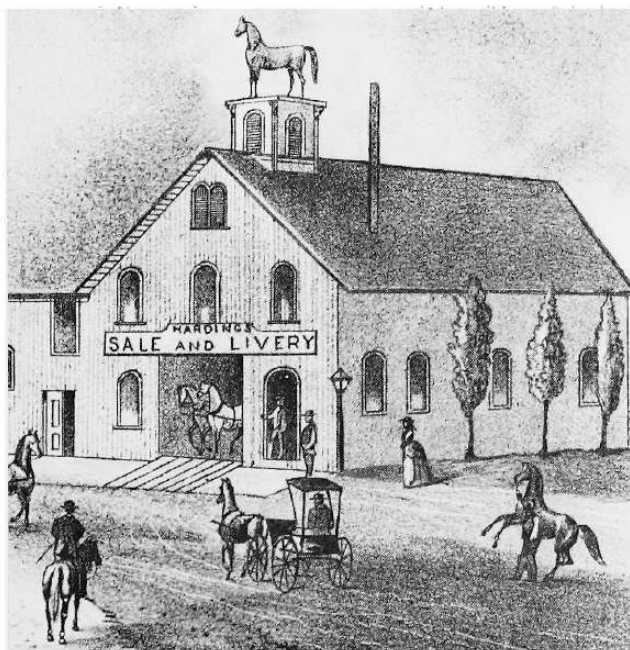
¹¹ Andreas, *Atlas*, 365-393; Harrington, *How 'Tis Done*, 80.

¹² Andreas, *Atlas*, 7.

¹³ L. F. Andrews, *Pioneers of Polk County, Iowa*, 1:55 (Des Moines, 1908); Harrington, *How 'Tis Done*, 82.

¹⁴ Harrington, *How 'Tis Done*, 81.

*The J. H. Harding
livery and sale stable
in Faribault*



have weighed upon us during the preparation of a work so unique and voluminous." He also acknowledged "the liberality of the citizens of Minnesota, and the generous manner in which they have supported our undertaking. . . . This generous support has not been without its effect on us, in making us the more earnest and determined in our efforts, that our patrons should not be disappointed, but should have delivered to them, within the specified time, an Atlas in all respects worthy of their liberal patronage."

For his fifteen dollars the subscriber received a volume measuring 17½ by 14 inches and with just under four hundred pages. It included double-page maps of the state, the United States, and the world; five pages of statistical maps of Minnesota and the United States; and seventy pages of county maps and plans of cities and towns. The volume also contained more than a hundred pages of lithographic sketches, portraits, views, and landscapes. Geographical and historical descriptions, statistical tables, and biographical data together totaled another hundred pages. Of particular importance to the financial success of the *Atlas* was the extensive list of "Patrons of the Minnesota State Atlas" that filled some thirty pages.

ANDREAS anticipated that the Minnesota volume would be the first in a series of illustrated state historical atlases. As soon as his surveyors and canvassers had completed their work in Minnesota, they were accordingly shifted to Iowa to begin work on an atlas there. Procedures for preparing the Iowa atlas and for soliciting subscriptions and contracts for illustrations and biographical sketches were the same as for the Minnesota volume. Notwithstanding the serious financial depression and the fact that illustrated atlases had been published for a number of Iowa counties, more than 22,000 copies of the Iowa atlas were sold at fifteen dollars apiece. Receipts from pictures and biographies were around \$70,000. Sales and production costs for the publication ex-

ceeded \$300,000, and the publisher's profit was reduced by cancellations.¹⁵

In 1875 the atlas company was once more reorganized, this time as Baskin, Forster, and Company. Under this name the firm began work that year on the *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Indiana*. Indiana had been pretty thoroughly covered by publishers of both county maps and atlases during the previous two decades. For this reason, and because of the persisting economic depression, only 12,000 subscriptions had been sold when the book was published in 1876. The project was a financial disaster from which Baskin, Forster, and Company—and Alfred T. Andreas—never fully recovered.¹⁶

Several other illustrated historical atlases in the style introduced by Andreas in his Minnesota volume were published during the next five or six years. Warner and Beers, also of Chicago, released an *Atlas of the State of Illinois* in 1876, a revised edition of which was issued in 1879 under the imprint of D. C. Edwards, Chicago. A *Historical Atlas of Wisconsin* was published at Milwaukee in 1878 by Snyder, Van Vechten and Company. The same plates were apparently used in 1881 by H. R. Page and Company of Chicago for their *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Wisconsin*.

Louis H. Everts, one of the Civil War friends who introduced Andreas to the mapping business, had his publishing headquarters in Philadelphia by the mid-eighties.¹⁷ Although by this time Everts' principal emphasis was on county histories and biographies, in 1885 he published *An Official State Atlas of Nebraska* in association with W. H. Kirk. An *Official State Atlas of Kansas* was issued under the imprint of L. H. Everts and Company in 1887. Both of these atlases were similar in size and format

¹⁵ Harrington, *How 'Tis Done*, 82.

¹⁶ Harrington, *How 'Tis Done*, 84.

¹⁷ J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia 1609–1884*, 3:2332 (Philadelphia, 1884). The biographical sketch of Louis H. Everts notes that he "transferred his headquarters to Philadelphia in 1872."

to the Andreas state atlases, but the Everts volumes included fewer illustrations.

AFTER 1875, when his publishing company failed, Alfred T. Andreas' name was associated with but one atlas. In 1884 he published in Chicago a *Historical Atlas of Dakota*. The volume was printed by R. R. Donnelley and Sons at the Lakeside Press and included county maps, biographical sketches, and historical summaries, but few illustrations. It was, on the whole, notably inferior to the works published by Andreas a decade earlier.

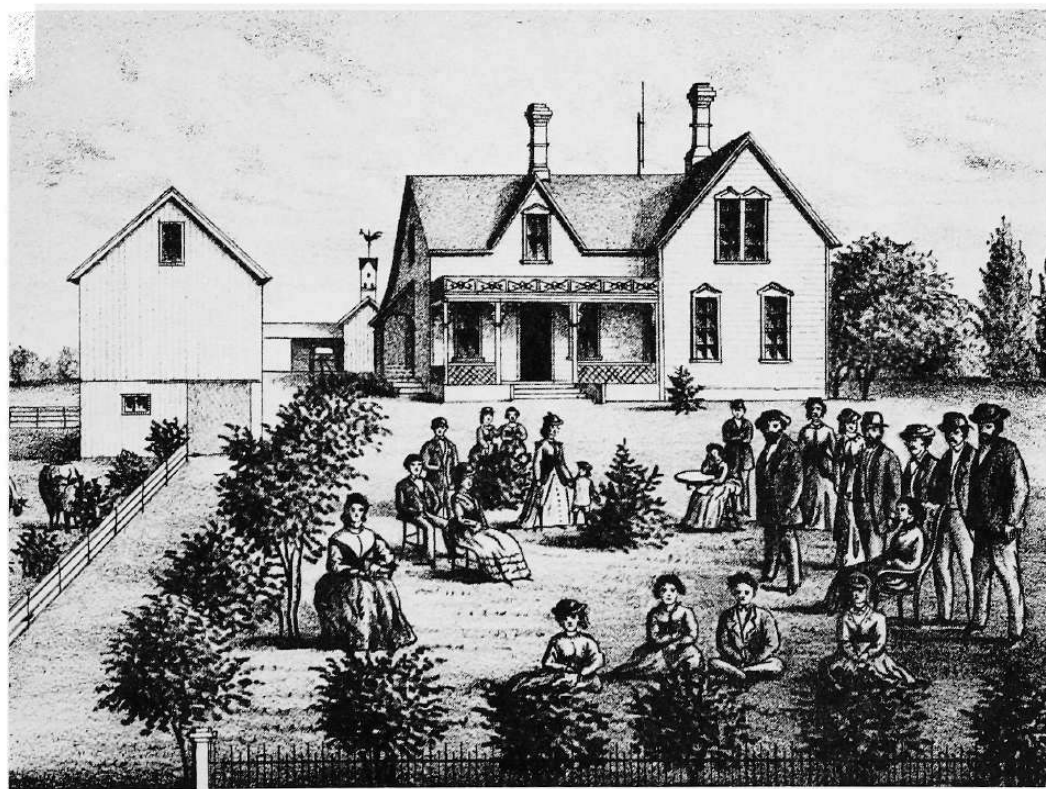
In the early eighties Andreas was also occupied in compiling a series of histories. In 1881 he published a *History of Milwaukee* and a *History of Northern Wisconsin*. These were followed in 1883 by a

¹⁸ John Maass, *The Gingerbread Age: A View of Victorian America*, 7 (New York, 1957).

THE ILLUSTRATIONS accompanying this article all come from *An Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota*.

History of the State of Kansas and in 1884 by a *History of Cook County, Illinois*. Best known of Andreas' historical works is the *History of Chicago*, published in three volumes from 1884 to 1886. It is still recognized as the best historical record of Chicago in the nineteenth century.

Alfred T. Andreas died on February 10, 1900, at New Rochelle, New York, where he was temporarily residing. His most lasting memorial is the series of illustrated county and state atlases published between 1871 and 1875. The two dozen or so Andreas atlases were unabashedly commercial ventures. Included within their covers, however, is an unexcelled historical, biographical, and pictorial record of midwestern America in the vigorous and lusty Victorian era. "For better or for worse," it has been written, "the period between 1840 and 1880 made America what it is today."¹⁸ A segment of the cultural history of these exciting years is graphically preserved in the pages of Andreas' illustrated atlases.





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