

lished until 1880 he drew a nostalgic picture of hunting conditions as he remembered them when he arrived in Minnesota as a young man in the 1830s. "The bear, the deer, the fisher, the martin [*sic*], and the raccoon, were the tenants of the woods; the beaver, the otter, and other amphibia, such as the mink and the muskrat, were to be found in the streams and lakes, while the prairies were dotted with countless herds of the bison and the elk, accompanied by their usual attendants, wolves and foxes, which scarcely deigned to seek concealment from the eye of the traveler. The numerous lakes and marshes were the breeding places of myriads of wild fowl, including swan, geese and ducks."³⁷

But even in 1856 Sibley was aware that game was scarcer and less accessible, daily

bags were necessarily reduced, and it was apparent that conservation legislation was needed to avoid the total extinction of both animals and wild fowl. Sibley obviously did not wish the buffalo and the elk to go the way of the passenger pigeon. For at least two decades he had found Minnesota a vast hunting ground at a time when sportsmen were few, rifles and fowling pieces had reached lethal efficiency, and game was legion. This time no man would see again.

³⁷ Sibley, "Memoir of Hercules L. Dousman," in *Minnesota Historical Collections*, 3:194.

THE PAINTING on page 223 is owned by the Peabody Museum of Harvard University; the wildlife etchings on pages 224 and 227 are from W. E. Webb, *Buffalo Land* (1872). The painting on page 218 is a recent gift to the society from Sibley's great-grandnephew, Sibley Flandrau Stuart.

Urban Crisis, 1857

LONG BEFORE air pollution, crime in the streets, and urban redevelopment were household words, St. Paul editor Thomas Foster had strong opinions on them. On May 21, 1857, in the pages of the *Daily Minnesotian*, he had this to say:

LOOK TO IT!—The approaches to the lower levee are very unpleasant. It is an unpleasant neighborhood. The grading of the streets have made numerous ponds, ditches, canals, &c., all filled with a green, slimy, stagnant, poisonous water. When the hot suns of July and August shine upon it, wo unto the inhabitants who are crowded into the dirty shanties along those cess pools. The heated, seething, putrid pools, festering and smoking in the sultry noons of summer, and exhaling their poisons on the cool midnight airs, will breed pestilence deadly and universal. The malignant Typhus will not only be there, but a dozen other fatal diseases, to depopulate the neighborhood. Under any other climate than that of Min-

nesota, it would have been so before now. But even here, where men can expose health, and risk life with greater impunity than anywhere else, almost, so certain a penalty cannot be much longer avoided. . . .

Disease, death, and a familiarity to suffering and mortality, produce invariably hardened and brutal indifference to it among those most in contact with it. Brawls, fights, riots, murders, &c., together with all crimes in the catalogue would abound after a season of sickness and death, all experience proves this; men become reckless, hardened, criminal. That neighborhood has hitherto, strangely enough, borne a good character. But under such influences as we mention, it may become a disgrace to the city, and crime, violence and bloodshed be as frequent and unnoticed as in some similar localities in eastern and western river cities known by such classical names as "Rat Row," "Bloody Row," "Hell's half acre," &c., &c. We hope not, but let those whose duty it is, LOOK TO IT!



Copyright of **Minnesota History** is the property of the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, or email articles, however, for individual use.

To request permission for educational or commercial use, [contact us](#).