

P I O N E E R

1860 – 1880

Pioneer Era (1860 – 1880)

The early history of brick production in Manitoba is a matter of fits, starts and failures. In 1860, the editor of the *Nor'Wester* stated that “Brick was attempted more than a quarter of a century ago [thus around 1835], but ineffectually, and of late has never been thought of. The entrepreneur should be encouraged, for there is a great scarcity of timber.”* The editor possibly alluded to an earlier attempt by Sir George Simpson, the Governor of Assiniboia, who had brought a “professed brick-maker from Russia, but he had soon to leave for want of employment.” Alexander Ross, writing in 1852, had also stated that: “Brickmaking has hitherto been entirely neglected here: a few attempts at different times have been made, sufficient only to test the quality of the clay, which in many places has been found good; but with the exception of a few brick chimneys, we have nothing as yet constructed of that useful article.” Indeed, in 1857, Henry Youle Hind had observed that “no kind of industry or a distinct trade or occupation existed in the settlements. Almost every man was his own wheelwright, carpenter or mason. The present condition of the settlement would not ... afford a living to any distinct class of artificer.”

First Attempts to Produce Bricks – The 1860s

In the summer of 1860, an American named J.C. Johnstone came to Red River with the express purpose of supplying “the Settlement with a new species of building material – brick.” He tried a number of sites, but to no avail. While he gave up for the time being, he promised to renew his efforts in the spring of 1861. He never did, possibly getting caught up in his country’s Civil War. The following summer, a Sargeant Woodcock of the Royal Canadian Rifles was offering a £100 reward for a suitable sample of pipeclay. It was not known if the reward was ever collected, though it was noted at the time that a number of samples were put forward. In 1869, J.J. Hargrave would comment that “brick-making has been repeatedly attempted on a small scale,



The Ross House (1852), now a museum in Winnipeg, at one time served as the post office for the Red River Settlement. It was typical of house construction of the era – seen here with its log walls, wooden shingles and the one brick feature: the chimney.

* Most of the quotes, facts and statistics included in the following overview, as well as several illustrations and site sketch plans, have been drawn from Randy Rostecki’s inventories. Readers can refer to those materials, typically via a community or brickyard name, for original source references.

but generally with no great success, owing partially, doubtless, to the inexperience of the workmen, and partly, it is said, to the friable [crumbly] quality of the clay employed."

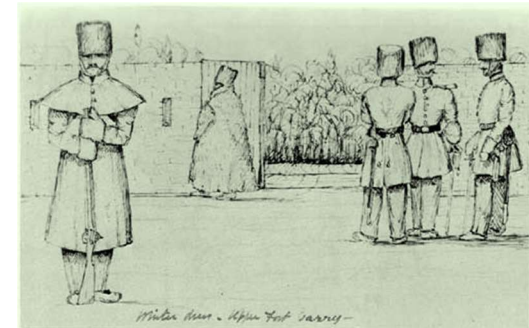
Charles Land – Manitoba's First Brick-maker

J.J. Hargrave's 1869 observation (noted above) regarding the hit-and-miss character of small-scale brick operations that had been attempted at the Red River Settlement throughout the 1860s, may have included that of Charles Land, but Land's operation actually has the distinction of being the first durable brick-making operation in Manitoba.

Charles Land (c1820-1907) had come to the future Manitoba in 1846 with the 6th Regiment of Foot, which was stationed at the Red River Settlement from 1846 to 1848, brought here at the request of Sir George Simpson, Governor-in-Chief of the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC). Simpson was concerned about the possibility of war between Great Britain and the United States over the Oregon boundary, as well as the increasing unrest among the local Métis population, an ongoing irritant to HBC fur-trading operations.

At some unknown date, although presumed to be around 1855, Land was said to have built brick kilns outside of Upper Fort Garry, on the site of the old Hudson's Bay Company store on the southwest corner of Main Street and York Avenue. It was here that he produced the first bricks ever fired in Manitoba.

Around 1856, Land purchased Pensioners' Allotments 47 and 48 from Thomas Picksley. These would later become river lots 80 and 73 St. James, two long, narrow tracts on the east side of Furby Street in Winnipeg. Of particular interest was 73 St. James, on the north side of the Portage Road (now Avenue). This site is of great note, for it was here that Land developed the province's first small brickyard, probably in the early 1860s.



Before he took up brick-making, Charles Land was a member of the 6th Regiment of Foot, three of whose companies were stationed at the Red River Settlement for two years, 1846-48. Land would have donned the kind of uniform seen in these sketches, drawn at the time by the regiment's Lieutenant George E. Finlay. (Courtesy Manitoba Historical Society)

In August 1870, the *New Nation* proclaimed that “everybody is building and everybody wants bricks.” Charley Lang [sic] had just burned a “splendid lot” of over 50,000 bricks, making them “Yorkshire fashion” (presumed to mean with a simple clamp kiln). Alexander Begg recalled in 1879, however, that “Land’s bricks were principally used for chimneys,” as opposed to other, more structural purposes.

The John Christian Schultz Brick Yard and Manitoba’s First Brick Building

Charles Land was joined in the brick-making business in the late 1860s by a renowned (or reviled, depending on one’s political stripe) Red River Settlement business and political figure, John Christian Schultz. Schultz (1840-96), who arrived at the Red River Settlement from Ontario in 1861, was the implacable foe of Louis Riel and the Métis people during the Red River Rebellion of 1869. Schultz was the leader of the ultra-loyalist Canadian Party, which promoted the annexation of Red River by the Canadian government, and encouraged new anglophone/Protestant immigration from Ontario. Schultz’s ultimate political success in the Rebellion allowed him to become a member of the Canadian House of Commons from 1871 to 1882, a Senator from 1882 to 1888, and the fifth Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba from 1888 to 1895.

It is known that Schultz had started a brick-yard at an unknown location around 1868, and in the 28 July 1868 issue of the *Nor’Wester*, then the only newspaper in the British Northwest, it was announced that he would commence construction on a brick building, being “the first of its kind erected in this Settlement. It will be situated between the ‘White Store’ and the street leading to the fort.” The ‘White Store’ was Schultz’s then-one-year-old facility a few feet away at the northeast corner of Main Street and Water Avenue.

That the *Nor’Wester* would consider the use of a familiar construction material newsworthy suggests that the bricks presaged a new era for the community – suggesting a new level of stability even. The construction of the Schultz structure



John Christian Schultz, a major political and business figure in early Manitoba history, served as Lieutenant-Governor from 1888-1895. (Courtesy Archives of Manitoba)

marked the first use of brick in a whole building project in what was to become Manitoba, and it was clearly a notable moment.

Schultz's new building, nearly completed by late October 1868, was two storeys in height and measured 8m x 12m (25' x 35'). The nature of the functions housed in the new building are unclear for the first two years of its life, but by March of 1871 Walter Davison was proudly advertising his restaurant in "the brick house next to the White Store." By the following July, the structure had been converted to the Queen's Hotel, operated by David Adam and Dugald Sinclair. The little brick building saw activity over the next 30 years as a grocery store, fruit store, liquor store and a plumber's shop. It also sat vacant for long stretches of time. In 1911 and again in 1913 it was greatly damaged in fires, and finally in 1913 it and its additions were cleared from the site.



Dr. Schultz's brick building of 1868, in the photograph seen in the centre-left, emblazoned with the word "Drugs," was lost to demolition in 1913. By 1871 Schultz had expanded his collection of buildings by the addition of a long, narrow, two storey brick structure at the corner of Water Avenue. This became Dr. William Turver's drug store, with lawyers' offices above. A third brick building, constructed by Wilson and Hyman in 1871, was located between Turver's drug store and the 1868 building. (Courtesy R. Rostecki Collection)

There are no references to Schultz's actual brick operation, but it is safely assumed that it followed the example of the Charles Land facility, and of course of the prevailing brick-making technologies of the day, given the rather rudimentary situation of the community at that time. So the brick yard was likely nearby – to facilitate easy transport of the finished product, and probably was to the east of the building site, presumably near the corner of Main and Water, and closer to the Red River. Bricks were presumably formed in some kind of hand-mould, and the finished product was fired in small "Yorkshire-method" clamps.

It is thought that Schultz's bricks were reddish or buff in colour, which was unusual at the time because other local bricks were a yellowish/cream hue. These may not have been very good bricks, however, as Schultz's detractors claimed in 1873 that they were the "most unsightly, ill-shapen and rotten clay daubs to which was ever applied the misnomer, bricks." And while these barbs likely had little effect on a man like John Christian Schultz, it is known that after selling 200,000 bricks to the Dominion Government for use in the new Winnipeg Post Office, Schultz and his partner, W.R. Brown, faded from the brick business by the mid 1870s.

Brick-making Operations from the Early 1870s

The success of Charles Land's and John Christian Schultz's brick-making operations from the late 1860s undoubtedly inspired other local entrepreneurs to try their hand at brick production – certainly a messy activity, but one also promising of considerable profits, if all went well. All of these basic economic calculations were also undoubtedly fired up by two significant political developments in the early 1870s – the formal entry of Manitoba as a province into the Canadian Confederation (in 1870) and then just three years later the incorporation of the City of Winnipeg (which by then had a population of 1,869). These transformative events promised great things for the new city and the new province – settlers, commercial growth, government buildings, and at least for certain keen-eyed observers – building contracts.

In 1870, the well-known fur trader and merchant Andrew McDermot started a short-lived brickyard, while a year later, a Mr. Spice produced an “excellent specimen brick” from a site on the north side of James Avenue, just west of Main Street. Spice did not last long, and was probably done in by the competition offered by the Manitoba Brick and Pottery Company which was incorporated in May of 1871.

The Manitoba Brick and Pottery Company was a well-capitalized venture whose directors consisted of some of Winnipeg’s leading citizens. According to Alexander Begg: “The members of the Brick and Pottery Company went to a great deal of expense in bringing machinery from Chicago, which, however, proved useless for our clay. The company afterwards manufactured hand-made bricks, having been obliged to abandon their expensive machinery.”

The operation was located on a 10-acre yard in Point Douglas, on Lot 32 St. John. By early August of 1873, two large kilns of brick had been burned. According to the *Free Press*, the brick was “hard, well-shaped and of a beautiful and uniform colour,” which was very similar to the cream-coloured brick of Milwaukee, even at that time well known and well regarded. Little is known of this firm’s production, nor its usage, though it is thought that most of the brick buildings constructed in Winnipeg up to 1875 came from this yard.

Brick-making Operations from the Later 1870s

The activities of three other firms operating in Winnipeg in the later 1870s provide via some modest news accounts, a much greater insight into typical brick operations and output from Manitoba at this time.

W.H. Disbrowe, an Ontario seedman who had come to Winnipeg in August 1876, acquired the old Charles Land brickyard on the north side of Portage Avenue between present-day Langside and Furby streets, and with it the extensive clay deposit. Disbrowe returned to Ontario for the winter, but when he came back to the



Well known Red River Settlement-era merchant Andrew McDermot (1790-1881) tried his hand at brick-making for one year – 1870. (Courtesy Manitoba Historical Society)



This image shows Winnipeg's Main Street ca. 1875, stretching from north to south (in the distance), and likely with the closest cross street being McDermot Avenue. The image shows primarily wooden structures, but it is known that a handful of buildings captured in the illustration are of brick – and likely from the yard of the Manitoba Brick and Pottery Company, which was the most active site at this date, and productive even into the 1880s. (Courtesy Archives of Manitoba)

city in March of 1877, he brought a partner in the venture, a Mr. Foxley. Mr. Foxley was a brick-maker in long standing, with 25 years' experience in England, the eastern provinces, British Columbia and the United States, and came highly recommended by Bulmer and Shepherd, a large firm of Montreal brick-makers. The Foxley and Disbrowe yard was noted in newspapers as selling "all round brick" for \$10.00 per thousand; veneer brick for \$12.00; and pressed brick, "an extra" quality expressly for fronts" at \$15.00 per thousand. This site and the partnership lasted only from 1877 to 1879.

Samuel Clack Biggs was a Winnipeg barrister and a venture capitalist. Among his business enterprises was the Portage Road Brick Yards, and was presumably the old Foxley-Disbrowe yard, which had earlier been the Charles Land yard. Biggs appears to have leased the Foxley-Disbrowe yard beginning in 1878, and by 1881 was turning out over one million bricks for the season. An 1881 article stated that the Biggs yard had four brick machines, two of which were then in operation. It was claimed that the yard made 50,000 bricks in one week using 20 to 25 employees and three or four horses. Mr. Biggs sold out within two years to Foley and Williams, who operated brick kilns for only a few more years until the clay at the site gave out.

In 1878 the Saul Brothers—David and John—had formed a brick-making concern (with a partner, Charles Wellman), with the first notice of action being from June of 1881, when it was reported that their brick yard at Point Douglas had successfully burned a kiln of 250,000 bricks, with another similar number awaiting firing. Some of these bricks were for sale, though the Sauls used many for the 10 building contracts they had underway. Two weeks later a second kiln was being burned, while another 250,000 bricks awaited firing. By late July the Saul's had 900,000 bricks in the yard moulded and ready for firing. They planned to make 1.5 million bricks that year. With the Point Douglas clay bed exhausted, the Saul Brothers were to move in 1882 to a site near St. John's Cathedral.



Winnipeg's first City Hall, which stood from 1876 to 1883, was a major local example of brick construction during the city's pioneer period. (Courtesy Archives of Manitoba)

Outside of Winnipeg, during the early 1870s, four entrepreneurs were also setting up shop, in the small communities that were being established in the newly formed Province of Manitoba. Three of these were south of the Winnipeg, with two at Morris and one at Emerson. The other one was north of the city, at East Selkirk. Beyond its existence and name (Wellman-Gardner), nothing is known of the East Selkirk operation. More is known about the other operations, and that information provides some minor insights into small-town pioneer operations.

The first functioning brick yard in Emerson was that of Peter Phillippe, established in 1878, and producing some fair cream-coloured brick. Phillippe had a brick machine from London, Ontario. During 1879 Phillippe supplied the brick for the Hudson's Bay Company store at West Lynne (opposite Emerson on the west side of the Red River). While he did have some competition from D. Ferguson, who had invented his own brick machine and produced brick and drain tile, the Emerson Brick Yard persevered at least into 1880. That spring Phillippe went 65 miles upriver and bought 500 cords of firewood at \$2.25/cord, and vowed to turn out a million bricks during that season.

At Morris, in the summer of 1875 "an enterprising young man" named William A. Russell started what was described as an "extensive brick yard." During early June he expected to have fired his first kiln of 100,000 bricks in time for Dominion Day. During 1876 he was noted as manufacturing bricks of a "superior quality" which sold for \$10.00 per thousand. His bricks were being used in buildings erected by himself, William Gallie and in the new school-house. That autumn 12 of Russell's bricks won a prize at the Provincial Exhibition. By 1877 the Town of Morris had two brick yards, the other one started by Gallie who was apparently inspired by Russell's success. The two yards were still in existence at Morris in 1879, but by 1880 Gallie and Russell appear to have combined their efforts.

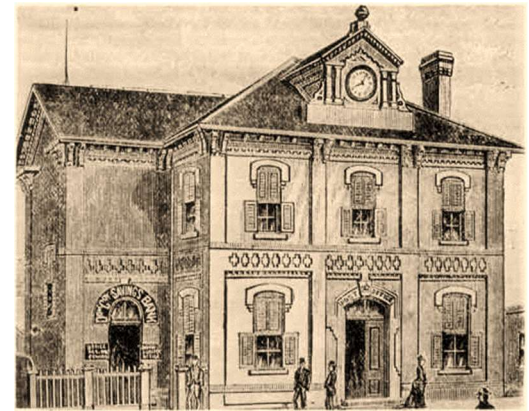
The Emerson Branch Rail Line and Brick-making Operations from 1879-1880

The date 3 December 1878 marked a profound moment in the history of the new Province of Manitoba, in the fortunes of the citizens of Winnipeg and St. Boniface, and in the activities of the province's brick-makers. That was the day that the Countess of Dufferin, the first locomotive in western Canada, met an American train at Dominion City, where the last spike was driven to commemorate the opening of the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railway. This inaugural rail line, which ran on the east side of the Red River from St. Boniface (significantly not from Winnipeg) to St. Paul, Minnesota, via Emerson and Pembina, North Dakota, came to be called the Pembina Branch.

The significance of the arrival of the railway in western Canada cannot be overstated. In a practical sense, the rail connection between Winnipeg (via St. Boniface) and eastern Canada (via American lines) allowed for the cost-effective import of both settlers and manufactured goods to the west (including, one must presume, brick-making equipment), and the export of grain and other agricultural produce to the east. This not only provided an invaluable boost to the fledgling western economy, but encouraged capital investment from eastern centres as well.

In the immediate wake of the inaugural rail line, five new brick operations were established in Winnipeg in 1879 through to 1880. One of these barely lasted a season, and the other was completely neglected in press reports, but three others were covered in news accounts of the day, which shed increasing light on how these places operated in the early years of the industry.

John E. Mould, a plastering contractor, opened his yard in 1879, on six lots that adjoined the Manitoba Rifle Association's range in Point Douglas. He began operations that April, with 20 employees turning out 18,000 bricks per day. By early



The construction of the Winnipeg Dominion Post Office, which operated at this building from 1876 to 1883, apparently used at least some brick from the yard of John Christian Schultz. (Courtesy Archives of Manitoba)

June, Mould and Company was preparing to burn 200,000 bricks in their kiln. This brick yard continued in business for several more years, burning two kilns of 250,000 and 300,000 bricks in 1880, and 175,000 and 200,000 in 1881. By 1881, they had a second yard at St. Boniface where they had burned a kiln of 801,000 bricks as of late June.

Pierre Chartier started a brick yard on the bank of the Seine River in St. Boniface in the spring of 1879. He apparently had an immediate order of 30,000 bricks for the new St. Boniface College building. By 1880 he had taken a partner, Joseph Pion, who would make bricks at La Broquerie a decade later. Pion took the yard over in 1881 or 1882. In June 1882, Pion had four slop machines in operation, with two more to be installed. His staff consisted of 12 men and six horses, and he used the Seine River as his water supply. He expected to manufacture 1.5 million bricks that year.

Beginning in 1880, James G. McDonald operated an important operation in Point Douglas – the old Manitoba Brick and Pottery Company’s yard on Lot 32 St. John, a 10-acre site. McDonald was known around Winnipeg as the “King of the Contractors,” mainly because of the large scale of his operations during the early 1880s. Possibly through political connections, he quickly became the biggest operator in Manitoba, garnering contracts to build not only the Louise railway bridge, but also prominent buildings such as the Bank of Montreal, Morris Block, Hudson’s Bay Company store and Ogilvie’s Mill. By mid-June of 1880 McDonald was installing a brick machine at his yard, obtained from E. & C. Gurney of Hamilton, Ontario. This was said to be capable of producing 25-30,000 bricks per day. By mid-July, a 250,000-brick kiln was under construction, while his brick machine turned out 50 bricks per minute, or 20,000 per day. He also had three slop machines, each of which produced 10-12,000 bricks per day, with more machines planned to be added. The McDonald operation employed 30 workers. By early September, McDonald had burned two kilns of brick – one of 160,000 and a recently-opened one of 270,000 brick. He was getting



This very old made-in-Manitoba brick was salvaged from a ca. 1877 house in downtown Winnipeg, which burned down in 2012. That house was veneered just a few years after its construction, with brick that was produced at a Dominion City brickyard. It is presumed that given its age this was from the yard of Grange and Tull, which was then under the supervision of one of the province’s early brick operators – Peter Philippe, who had started a yard in Emerson in 1878. (Courtesy Manitoba Historical Society)

ready to burn another 260,000 as well as one after that of 50,000. McDonald's yard closed after four seasons of production, in 1884.

Outside of Winnipeg and St. Boniface, a number of entrepreneurs were also opening brickyards, in the small communities that were being established, especially after the completion of the Pembina Branch rail line in the winter of 1878. Of the six new operations, two were in established brick-making communities – at Emerson and East Selkirk; neither of these lasted more than two seasons, with only modest production.

Two of the others were at the established community of Portage la Prairie and two were at strategic locations on the Assiniboine River – at Nelsonville and Grand Valley; these latter two short-lived operations later moved when Canadian Pacific Railway



This ca. 1879 view of Winnipeg's Main Street, looking north from about Portage Avenue, shows at right-centre the large wall signage of Stobart Eden & Co. Alexander Begg provided an account of this important early brick building in *Ten Years in Winnipeg*: "In November the brick block, erected on Main street, by Messrs. Stobart, Eden & Co., at a cost of \$20,000, was completed, and as a monument of the growing thrift and enterprise of our city, spoke volumes for the march of progress which had so practically and earnestly set in. Space will not admit of an extended account of the structure, the following facts will, however, serve to convey an idea to the stranger of the solidity and extent of the building. The entire length of the block was something over 100 feet, with a width of 33 feet ; the main portion 70 x 33, being three stories in height, and the rear portion 30 x 33 feet, one storey with a basement, the entire length of the building. The native white brick was used in its construction." (Courtesy Archives of Manitoba)

(CPR) lines came through to, respectively, Brandon in 1881 and Morden in 1882. It is presumed that the bricks of the Nelsonville and Grand Valley yards were used only for chimneys. None of these newcomers noted in this pioneering stage of Manitoba brick production lasted very long, and none were much-covered by local press, so their activities and production are not known.

Conclusion – The State of the Industry at 1880

From 1868 to 1880, Manitoba's brick-making industry had evolved from modest, rudimentary production, with bricks often only suitable for chimney construction, to yards that were firing kilns of 200,000 bricks at a time, to be used in the kind of impressive new masonry buildings rising in Winnipeg and a few of the province's other communities, themselves just recently established.

The industry had gone from complaints that John Christian Schultz's bricks were the "most unsightly, ill-shapen and rotten clay daubs to which was ever applied the misnomer, bricks," to claims that the product of the Manitoba Brick and Pottery Company were "hard, well-shaped and of a beautiful and uniform colour."

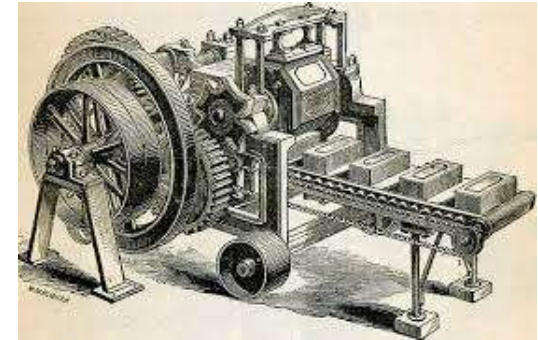
The industry certainly was still in its infancy, and the great majority of yards were short-lived—18 of the 25 brick-makers setting up shop in this period only lasted a year or two—but a few were more enduring (between three and five years), and two—the Lackey-Smith operation in Portage la Prairie and Manitoba Brick and Tile in Winnipeg—actually made a go of it for, respectively, eight and nine years.

So the industry had gradually moved from a slightly ragtag collection of one-season operations to the kind of professional activity that a newly energized community, and province, could promote with gusto – and with real, impressive numbers. Newspaper accounts of the day were happy to report, for example, that Mr. Russell in Morris (in June of 1875) was expected to burn a kiln of 100,000 bricks; and that in 1879, in

Winnipeg's Point Douglas area, the John E. Mould yard was turning out 18,000 bricks per day; and that by early June the same firm was preparing to burn 200,000 bricks. And these were just two samples – nearly every significant firm operating by the late 1870s was making similar production claims to the media.

There is also a sense of the sizes of operations, of the kind of current brick-making technologies being employed, and hints of skill-sets required for these kinds of activities. At the Mould yard in Point Douglas we are advised that in 1879 there were 20 employees for the season. Accounts of the James McDonald yard in Point Douglas provided even more details – by mid-June of 1880 a new brick machine was operating at the yard, obtained from E. & C. Gurney of Hamilton, Ontario, which was said to be capable of producing 25-30,000 bricks per day. McDonald also had three slop machines, each of which produced 10-12,000 bricks per day. At this time, the McDonald operation employed 30 workers. The Portage Road Brick Yards had by 1880 four brick machines, using 20 to 25 employees and three or four horses. And at least in one instance we get a sense of the level of skills that were new being invested in all of this work – with arrival in Winnipeg in 1877 of Mr. Foxley, a brick-maker in long standing, with 25 years' experience. This slightly sketchy information, combined with the historical narrative provided in the previous section, is suggestive of the technical nature of the industry in Manitoba at this time. It is clear that there were various technologies at work – hand-made bricks turned out in wooden moulds, horse-powered pug mills, hand or steam-powered pressing and moulding machines, and presumably both clamp and scove kilns.

We are also getting a sense of the business end of the industry – with issues of brick quality being identified, and prices being established. There are several observations about preferred brick colour – the Emerson yard of Peter Phillippe, of 1878, was producing fair cream-coloured brick, while the Manitoba Brick and Pottery Company, in August of 1873, according to the *Free Press*, had fired brick that was “hard, well-shaped and of a beautiful and uniform colour,” apparently similar to the cream-coloured brick of Milwaukee.



Henry Clayton, London, wire cut brick extruding machine 1880. (Courtesy WikiCommons)

In terms of price, the Disbrowe-Foxley operation was noted in 1877 newspapers as selling “all round brick” for \$10.00 per thousand; veneer brick for \$12.00; and pressed brick, “an extra quality expressly for fronts” at \$15.00 per thousand. Mr. Russell’s yard at Morris was selling bricks of a “superior quality” for \$10.00 per thousand in the summer of 1875. It is important to keep in mind that a typical chimney would have required about 500 bricks, and one of the larger brick commercial or public buildings of the day might take 25,000 bricks in its wall construction.

An accounting from Alexander Begg, in his impressive *Ten Years in Winnipeg*, from 1879, contains important references to brick quantities and values used in the construction of the new Winnipeg City Hall (begun in 1876): a total of 480,487 bricks were required, at cost of \$30 per 1,000, and so valued at \$14,415.00. The price here is



This ca. 1880 image of Winnipeg’s Main Street, looking north from about McDermot Avenue, shows several brick buildings – distinguished by their height (two to three storeys), flat roofs and ample fenestration, a typical quality of masonry construction. (Courtesy Archives of Manitoba)

notable, when compared with known local values – and so suggests that these bricks were presumably from the United States, with quality and freight rates built into the much higher cost.

The issue of distribution, which might have appeared in newspaper accounts if bricks from a yard were being sent further afield, does not appear to have been going on at this early stage of the growth of the industry. It was still in its infancy. Even the opening of the Pembina Branch does not seem to have yet facilitated export of bricks – there were just not enough yards, and of course just not enough building projects going on at this time.

There are no images of these pioneering operations – even of the people involved, except for Mr. Schultz and Mr. McDermot. There are a few images of the earliest brick buildings, including Schultz's store, the Winnipeg City Hall and some of the brick buildings on Winnipeg's Main Street. While Winnipeggers and Manitobans may have been proud of these new buildings, symbols of progress and perhaps even of promise, they were not entirely sure of their future prospects. It is useful to recall just how raw the place was throughout the 1870s, and how other construction materials and processes were just as viable as the "new" brick construction: Alexander Begg, again in his *Ten Years in Winnipeg*, observed that "we now come to the Court House [of 1873], erected at a cost of about \$40,000, and built solidly of oak logs fitted into each other and afterwards sided over with pine. This building cost a lot of money, but is no ornament to the community." It may not have been an ornament, but neither ultimately was the new Winnipeg City Hall, which went up in 1876, and whose fine brick walls must have been seen by many as the symbol of a new dawn; that is, until it proved so unstable that just seven years later it was torn down.

So, all in all, the operations that were active at this time in Manitoba's history were adequately providing enough product to satisfy the citizenry. But things were about to change – and in a major way.



Shoring-up Winnipeg's City Hall, which would come down in 1883, just seven years after it went up, in 1876. (Courtesy Archives of Manitoba)