

*Exploring Historical Brickmaking in Minnesota*

# Minnesota Bricks

April 2018

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[www.mnbricks.com](http://www.mnbricks.com)

## Chaska Brick

Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



[www.chaskabrick.com](http://www.chaskabrick.com)

# Contents

1. What's New?	3
2. Photo of the Month	4
3. For Sale	5
4. Word Search	6
5. A Look Back	7
6. Brick Structure of the Month	9



# 1. What's New?

- This newsletter!! I am going to start something new, producing a newsletter once a month, sharing some of the historical information I come across.
- I continue work on my book about the brickyards of Chaska, Minnesota
- If you want to sign up to automatically receive this newsletter, you can do so at [www.mnbricks.com](http://www.mnbricks.com)
- I know there are a lot of historical buffs out there. If you have information on bricks or brickyards, I would love to hear about it. If you have old historical photographs you would like to share, those are also great conversation pieces too.

Share information  
& old photographs!



## 2. Photo of the Month



### What stands out?

I would say the horse! In the early days, horses played a big role in the brickyard, furnishing power and transportation. A good horse was a valued part of the team.

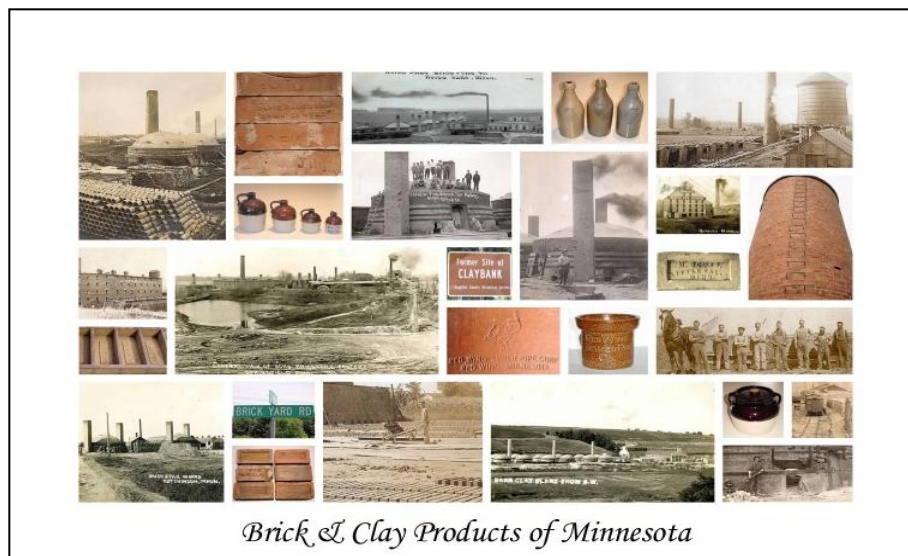
*On the back of the card:  
"We had our pictures taken the other day  
up to the brick yard. This don't show  
much of the yard. But it shows where I  
work out in the clay. The one with the cap  
on is me."*

# 3. For Sale

There are still many brick-related remnants left from the old days.

Shown below is a 20 x 30 inch collage poster about the brick and clay products of Minnesota. You can find it for purchase on the “shop” page of my website, [www.mnbricks.com](http://www.mnbricks.com).

On the same page mentioned above, there are other posters for sale on various brick towns, the historic Minnesota River Valley churches, and the Minnesota Winter of 1880-81.





# 4. Word Search

## Winona, Minnesota Brick

G K S C A B R D S A C G L U H L D N D P P S Y I P Q I S J E  
O E C U P Z O K D H K A H A O V N P W U V W H L B C G F O U  
Y X R I G A A Q X Z K T V O L N T O G Z N I R I W I M F H E  
A K I M R A O U Z G I R H C Y H Y F B U I N N S L K I U N J  
T O C C A B R P X M B C V V L B B S Y X H G E M B D U L G O  
W U R I R N Z L S N S F Q G A O X I D D A B O L V X U B R I  
C Y F T R Z S N O L X U U V N S R O P T M R E G L K N R O R  
Z Q Y K G B I E A A N I C U D L Z C E E E I J J R B Z E F N  
K E V N C R A M T S F J S T B H R W O V F D C R E D R V F H  
S R B D R T R N D T E C C X R R A R A O Y G T D K R F I O F  
F M I O M O X A O A L I P E I Y Q L C D R E Y R L K B R C L  
K V H L N N Z F R N E E B N C O L K G U V O W N E E X R W K  
B Y W K J H E Z P F I V R I K E E W S T E A M B O A T S N X  
S O P M T K M O L W V W T S Y N V X P E E Z J I V S N N W J  
C I V M Z F V W D H F Y W R S H T Z M O E M D K B I H C R L  
I X P Q X B Y Q I T C U C A Y L U G N H V R C I O W J O Q D  
H O A R D N T E N N E Y A T O S E N N I M H Y X C E W J S T  
I X N E V E L M Q Q T R G S E X H O V L H S D O A X J F R C  
K D U D L A I C C V Z N E D I A M N A I D N I G J O R W L N  
B U H D A O R L I A R K E Q E F P U N X O D A X F M K Y Z U

BIESANZ BRICK  
DUNNELL BRICK  
E I FOCKENS  
GATEWAY CITY  
GERMAN SETTLERS

GILMORE VALLEY  
HOARD N TENNEY  
HOLYLAND BRICK  
INDIAN MAIDEN  
JACOB VOELKER

JOHN GROFF  
MINNESOTA  
NORMAL SCHOOL  
ORRIN SMITH  
RAILROAD HUB

RIVER BLUFFS  
STEAMBOATS  
SUGAR LOAF  
SWING BRIDGE  
WINONA BRICK

# 5. A Look Back

## The Minnesota Fur Trade

Minnesota history Segment

**Excerpt from: The South-Western, Shreveport, Louisiana, Wednesday, March 11, 1857, Page 1**

Four or five years ago, the fur trade was the paramount commercial and industrial interest of the territory. Two or three years further back, and it was not only the paramount, but the sole business interest. The population of the territory was composed almost entirely of its employers and attaches. St. Paul derives its whole importance (a small importance then) from being the depot of the Winnebago and Chippewa outfits; while Mendota, the seat of the Sioux outfit, gave laws to the immense region occupied by the Dakotas, and chains of trading posts as far as Lac qui Parle, on the Minnesota, and Pembina on the Red River...

The influx of a white population consequent upon the establishment of a territorial government—the increase of competition in the Indian trade, concurring with the gradual decrease of its products, and causes that lay beyond these, and that have been gradually but surely promoting the decline of the western fur-trade in general—all contributed to weaken the efficiency of the fur company's organization in our territory... Two (business) houses alone, Messrs. Forbes & Kittson, and Messrs. Culyer & Farrington, are connected at this time with the fur trade in this city.

The trade is almost entirely limited at present (1857) to the Pembina or Red River regions, and are around the head waters of the Mississippi. The buffalo robes come almost entirely from this source, the buffalo ranges being restricted to the region north of the Cheyenne (Sheyenne River in North Dakota), and west of the James river (also in North Dakota). The Minnesota river country has fallen off in buffaloes very considerably—the whole receipts for export from that region not amounting to more than 1,200 robes. ...The table given below, for which we are indebted to N. W. Kittson, Esq., exhibits the total exports of furs from St. Paul, for the present year..." (On next page)



64,299	rats	\$11,572.56	362	badgers	\$91.00
8,276	minks	\$17,621.00	2,032	wolves	\$3,048.00
1,428	martins	\$5,570.00	2,549	kit-foxes	\$1,071.00
1,045	fishers	\$4,702.50	610	bearskins	\$6,700.00
876	red foxes	\$1,095.00	20	cross fox	\$100.00
3,400	coons	\$2,550.00	8	silver fox	\$400.00
10	wolverines	\$25.00	50	lynx	\$125.00
405	otter	\$1,417.56	<u>7,500</u>	<u>buffalo robes</u>	<u>\$11,200.00</u>
585	beavers	\$882.00	93,455	<b>TOTALS</b>	\$68,170.62

The monetary total from the above named source was \$96,750.50, different than the \$68,170.62 total I came up with, so there is an error somewhere. Even so, it is amazing that this industry involved nearly 100,000 animals in just one year for one St. Paul buyer!





# 6. Brick Structure of the Month



## Unknown Orange Brick

I happened to be taking a trip along I-90 in southern Minnesota after the historic EF4 tornado outbreak on June 17, 2010. In tracking the tornado path, I came across this neat old barn, which appears to be made of orange brick. I have never seen anything like it!





The barn is not in very good shape, and the brick is crumbling in spots. However, it must have been top of the line in its day!