

Exploring Historical Brickmaking in Minnesota

Minnesota Bricks

July 2018

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www.mnbricks.com

Chaska Brick

Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



www.chaskabrick.com

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1. What's New?

- I was contacted recently about a brick sculpture made by John Mason, located at the Minneapolis Art Institute. He may have used Ochs brick (from Springfield, Minnesota) in his sculpture. This is one use of brick I had never heard about!
- I continue to get inquiries about where to find Chaska brick. I wrote a blog post about it recently, which is located at:

www.chaskabrick.com/blog

- If you want to sign up to automatically receive this newsletter, you can do so at www.mnbricks.com
- I am hoping to make some of my material available in audio format. I have over 1,000 pages on www.mnbricks.com. I would venture to guess I have about the same number that haven't been added yet. My goal is to make my material more interesting and accessible. Stay tuned!



2. Photo of the Month



MEN LOADING WOOD ONTO A WOOD TRAIN

What is going on?

Before coal became widely used, burning wood was the primary means for cooking food, boiling water, and heating homes.

Can you imagine how much wood it would take to keep the large cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis supplied?

Like the transport of agricultural materials to market, the railroads quickly became involved in the cutting and transport of wood as well. It was a very profitable business in Minnesota.

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 with many pictures of historic silos from Minnesota and Iowa. You can find it for purchase on the "shop" page of my website, 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

EAST GRAND FORKS, MINNESOTA BRICK

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

ANDREW J STORFJELD
CLAY UNDER TOPSOIL
CREAM BRICK
EAST GRAND FORKS
ERNEST R JACOBI

POLK COUNTY
RAILROAD JUNCTION
RED LAKE RIVER
RED RIVER BRICK CORP
RED RIVER OF THE NORTH

FORK IN THE RIVER
GRAY CLAY
GREAT NORTHERN RAILROAD
INTENSE FARMING
MICHAEL J MORAN

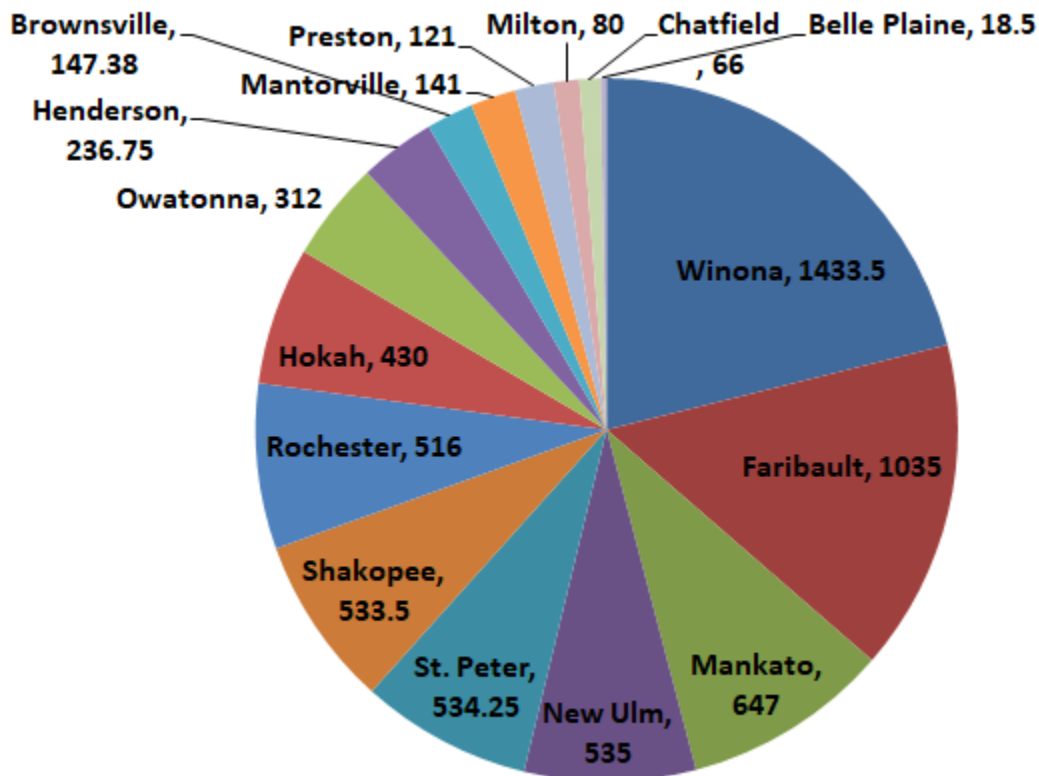
RED RIVER VALLEY
RICH SOIL
RIVER FLOODING
STEAMBOAT HUB
WOOD SCARCE

5. A Look Back

EARLY LIQUOR PRODUCTION

MINNESOTA HISTORY SEGMENT

With a view of getting the amount of lager beer made in this Congressional district, we were permitted, several days ago, to examine the returns made by the U. S. Assessor to Mr. Hall, the U. S. Collector at this place. In the entire district, there are about thirty breweries, which have made returns during the past eleven months, and the amount reported is as follows:



Continued on the next page...

Total [of the numbers from the graphic on the previous page] $6,705 \frac{7}{8}$ [not sure what the units were supposed to be].

Or about 7,316 barrels, or 235,112 gallons in a year.

Of course none of the manufacturers return a greater amount than they actually make, and in some instances probably less. Winona makes one fifth of the amount produced in this district, and Mankato about one tenth. There are two or three breweries at the former place, and only one here. There is but one brewer in the whole district that makes larger returns than Mr. Bierbauer, our brewer, and he is at Winona. Mankato is emphatically a beer drinking community, for in addition to that made at home, one of the St. Peter breweries finds a market here for a part of his beer. The revenue paid on beer, we believe, is one dollar a barrel. While there are about thirty breweries in the district, there are only three distilleries – one at Mankato, one at Shakopee, and the other at Milton, in Dodge county. They report, for eleven months, as follows:

Mankato $1,073 \frac{2}{3}$ gallons

Shakopee $694 \frac{1}{3}$ gallons

Milton 304 gallons

Total 2,072 gallons

Or about 2,260 in a year. Of this, one-half is manufactured at Mankato. Messrs. Morse & Fuller, of Winona, report 5,115 gallons of bonded spirits at that place, the tax on which will be paid in this district. The tax on spirits is \$2 per gallon, and the total revenue from whisky, in this district, will be double as much as the tax received from beer. (*The Mantorville Express*, Friday, January 12, 1866, Page 2)

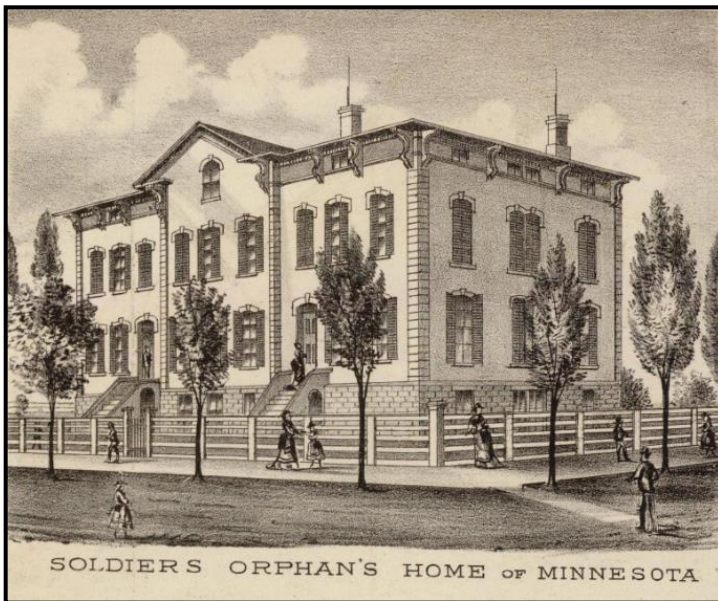


6. Brick Structure of the Month



SOLDIERS' ORPHANS HOME WINONA, MINNESOTA

The home for the orphans' of soldiers [of the Civil War], in this city, is doing a most beneficent work. Aside from an appropriation of \$5,000 by the State, the Home is mostly managed and sustained by the Grand Army of the Republic. It is located in the upper part of the city, on what



FACT

**PHOTO IS FROM THE 1874
ANDREAS ATLAS OF
MINNESOTA**

is known as the old Tucker property, and is under the immediate supervision of Mrs. C. P. Flower, Matron, who manages the thirty-five children – twenty girls and fifteen boys – with rare tact. They are well fed and clothed, two suits being provided for each child, and they all appear to be contented and happy. If the title to the property could be made perfect, the buildings would be enlarged so as to accommodate more, as a hundred applications have been refused for want of room. No length of time is specified for remaining in the institution. Those who wish to become teachers may continue along until they graduate in the Normal School. As showing their contentment it may be mentioned that only one boy has run away, and he was subsequently brought back and is now a steady member of the family. As the children grow up they will be allowed to leave the institution if it is found that they will be adopted into good homes. Fifteen of these orphans came from the Protestant Asylum at St. Paul. The Matron has a great charge, but she succeeds in having the most thorough system and discipline, a few instances of which will be of interest. [continued next page]

Each one is required to take a bath once a week. They make their own beds and sweep their own rooms. They are not allowed to mingle or play with other children, but must confine their sports to their own yard. They rise at six and retire at nine o'clock, some of them earlier. The larger girls assist in setting the table and washing dishes; also wash and mend their own clothing. It takes pretty active work in the commissary department to provide for this little army. The cook bakes thirty loaves of bread a day every day except Sunday and Monday, using up a barrel of flour per week. Everything is neat and orderly about the house. The matron's room is suitably carpeted; also the parlor. A girl commands the girls, and when the little troop goes to school one commander has the ordering of the company. From these hastily sketched details, it will be seen that the institution is doing a work worthy of the hearty support of all our citizens. (*Winona Daily Republican*, Friday, September 22, 1871, Page 3)

Appearance of the Home. The building occupies a good location on the corner of Sanborn and Center streets, facing eastwardly on the latter. It is built of brick, resting upon a high basement of stone, finished in range work. The window and door sills are of cut stone, the trimmings of Milwaukee brick, which give a very pleasing effect to the beauty of the edifice. Two large flights of steps ascend to the front halls. Blinds complete the exterior work. Above the basement there are two stories and an attic, so that the building has an imposing and stately appearance. The property is surrounded with a neat fence, giving to the premises an air of completeness and order. Inside. It is within the walls where the comforts and conveniences burst upon the view of the beholder, and if the reader will follow the reporter, he shall enjoy all the special attention which it is the privilege of the press to receive.

The Basement. We start at the bottom round of the ladder, while Captain Gould, in the most obliging manner, patiently answers all questions and with commendable pride expatiates upon the beauties of the kitchen, the range and the laundry with a fluency that in ten minutes thoroughly convinces the reporter that the Captain "knows how to keep a hotel." The Kitchen. This is the vital part of the whole concern. Health and happiness find their source in this life sustaining apartment of the institution, and, recognizing this fact, the officers have spared no pains to make it a model in its line. It may be well to state, in passing, that all the cooking, heating and ventilating apparatus, gas fixtures and furniture for the kitchen, laundry, dining room, etc., are furnished by the Orphans' Home Association. And first among the important objects in their liberal outfit of the culinary department, is the mammoth Warren hotel range for preparing the hot dishes and savory meals of the juvenile army that assembles at meal time.

This range is one of the best made, and, we understand, is the only one in Southern Minnesota aside from one in a hotel at Mankato. It is a model of scientific achievement in the art of cooking, and we can only commend it to the careful notice of our readers without describing it at length. It burns either wood or coal; heats the hot water for the various parts of the building, besides doing all kinds of cooking and baking. On the opposite side of the room, which, by the way, is of simple size, is an iron sink for washing dishes. A large dresser and cupboard are conveniently near at the left, while on the right is the force pump so constructed as to draw soft water from the cistern or hard water from the well, and force the same into the tank situated in the attic for use in the building. A large kneading table, at the side of the kitchen, supplied with flour bins underneath will excite the admiration and envy of the bakers. [continued next page]

Two doors open from the kitchen to the dining room, and it also has connection with the wood room back and with the laundry at the south end of the building. The Dining Room. This is a large and well lighted apartment extending across the north end of the basement. At one end of the room is a cabinet or sideboard on a large scale, with glass doors, drawers and apartments for the table ware, napkins, cutlery, etc. Prominent also in the dining room furniture are six white oak extension tables, capable of being "long drawn out" to the distance of fifteen feet each. These tables were made in Mr. Bohn's manufactory and will stand comparison by the side of any furniture of a similar kind in the country.

The Wood Room. If thermometers didn't have such a strong affinity for zero in this country, wood rooms would be second rate affairs, but as matters now exist they play no small part in the domestic drama. In fact they are absolutely essential to peace in the family. With pleasure, then, let it be recorded that the wood room of the Home has been well considered, and so impartially constructed as to permit all the occupants of the kitchen, dining room, laundry, and even the vegetable cellar, to "take a hand in." The Laundry. Whist I shake the dust off thy feet, and allow the visions of festooned clothes lines and immaculate linen to please thy fancy as we approach this wonderful, watery spot, where garments, rusty and wrinkled, are transformed to their pristine loveliness. Behold the pleasant sunlight streaming in from South windows.

Let thy orbs descend to practical things, and look upon the labor-saving arrangements of the room. Here is a long, low wooden rack, underneath which is a zinc-lined box or trough, all of which, we are informed, constitutes the wash tub sink from which the water is carried off in pipes to the general drain. All heavy lifting of tubs is avoided. Hot and cold water is supplied by the mere opening of faucets over the tubs. A large ironing table with eight large drawers for holding the clean clothes is also pronounced one of the convenient features of the laundry. Bath Rooms. Opening from the laundry are two bath rooms with two large tubs in each, supplied with hot and cold water, and lighted with gas.

Vegetable Cellar. This is a well arranged adjunct of the institution, occupying the southeast corner of the basement. It has a good supply of bins for different kinds of vegetables, and is well fitted for being kept clean and pure. Drainage. Right here we may as well describe the drainage of the building, which is accomplished by means of tile pipes, underneath the basement, running back fifty feet from the building into a large cesspool sixteen feet in diameter and sunk into the ground twelve feet below the basement floor. Every room in the building where water is used, drains into this cesspool. All the waste water from the kitchen, laundry, bath rooms and wash rooms finds a common level in this general receptacle. Heating Apparatus. The whole building is heated by two of Lawson's furnaces, one situated at each end of the basement.

The Main Floor. Having completed a survey of the basement, the visitor will proceed to inspect the main floor, the ascent to which, from the basement, is either by a stairway from the dining room or from the laundry. At the south end of the building are a sick room, sewing room, servants' room, and a bed room, all of which are of convenient size and well adapted for the purposes intended. Two main halls open from Center street. Between them are situated the matron's room, or reception room, from which opens a pleasant bedroom and a large closet. There are two large play rooms on this floor, also a study, or library, which is located in the northeast corner. All rooms on the first and second floor have two ventilators each, and each room on the first floor is supplied with a heating register. The walls of the first floor are eleven feet high; on the second floor ten and a half feet. In the halls and on the stairways, as in the library also, the floors are covered with matting. In passing through these apartments the fine character of the carpenter work cannot fail to be noticed. [continued next page]

The interior is finished with a graceful moulding, and all the wood work is oak grained, save the doors, which are of handsome white walnut, or butternut, oiled and varnished. The stair treads are of white maple, which is very durable. In the second story all the floors are oiled and present a well finished appearance. Dormitories. The whole of the second floor is devoted to sleeping rooms in which the great requisites of ample space, with plenty of light and air are all admirably combined. A hall runs lengthwise through the building and at each end are convenient wash rooms for the use of the children. A door in the middle of the hall separates the sexes, the boys occupying one end of the building and the girls the other.

The bedrooms are furnished with iron bedsteads and an abundance of comfortable bedding, the large rooms having four beds each, the smaller ones a less number. The Attic. This is a commodious place five feet high at the eaves and ten feet in the middle. At present it has not been appreciated to any particular use, but is a convenient reserve for emergencies. The water tank, however, is in this part of the building, and can hold thirty-five barrels of the aqueous fluid with perfect ease. It is a hard drinker, but indulges chiefly in soft water, which latter, wrung from the clouds, is carefully husbanded in a three hundred barrel cistern at the rear of the building. This cistern has a brick filter and is "A. No. 1" in every respect.

General Features. In the foregoing details we have not troubled the reader with the particular dimensions of the several apartments, for they are all sufficiently large to meet the demands of the institution. The building itself covers an area forty by seventy-two feet, and has a barn and out-buildings a short distance in the rear. The whole establishment is lighted with gas, heated by furnaces, and supplied with hot and cold water. The ventilation of a portion of the rooms is secured by shafts into the chimneys. The remainder discharge their foul air into ducts in the walls which open into the attic.

Who Did The Work. The plans for the building were designed by Mr. C. G. Maybury, the well known architect of this city, and have been executed by the contractor and owner of the building, Mr. C. Bohn, under whom various portions of the work have been done as follows: Painting, Dierks & Hartman; plastering, Giese; stone and brick work, Monk & Goeckler. The plumbing and gas-fitting was done by Mr. Toye; heating, cooking and ventilating apparatus by Bennett & Co., of St. Paul. Cost of the Structure. Mr. Bohn in the outset contemplated putting up a building to cost about \$10,000, but after commencing the work he decided to build with a view to greater permanency, and accordingly spent about \$12,000 in the structure. By a well devised plan it is so arranged that with a very few changes it can be transformed into a citified tenement house with plenty of room for three families. (*Winona Daily Republican*, Saturday, December 14, 1872, Page 3)

**THE COOK BAKED 30
LOAVES OF BREAD A
DAY!**

News Nugget 1



The men at work on the railroad near Ruble's grove, just east of town, dug up an Indian battle-ax of huge proportions, yesterday. That grove, situated as it is at the head of Lake Albert Lea, used to be a favorite camping-ground of the Indians in years gone by. Indeed, for several years after the first settlement of our county, the Winnebago's would rendezvous there each spring and autumn for the purpose of hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering wild rice. (*The Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Thursday, June 3, 1869, Page 3)

Sugar making has been a success in this region the present season, which has been the best for many years. Large quantities of sugar and syrup have been marketed in this place, and there is yet in the hands of makers and abundant supply for home consumption. The price of sugar has been firm at 25 cents per pound, and for syrup from \$1.50 to \$2.00 a gallon. Though these prices seem high, a visit to any of the camps, when in full blast, will satisfy the veriest croaker than even those figures are poor pay for the amount of hard labor and exposure that must be endured by those who seek sweetness in this way. Yet they will do it, and what is more, seem to enjoy it – call it fun – but where that fun comes in, we can't exactly see. We visited the camp of our esteemed friend, Mr. B. F. McVey, a few miles above town, the first of the week, and found him about closing operations for the season. He had made a large lot of fine syrup only, and as is his nature, seemed happy and well satisfied with results. From him we learned the general routine of sugar-making, which, with the poor shelter from the snow and rain storms – the sleepless nights, and unavoidable and continued exposure, did not favorably impress us with the speculation. We enjoyed a very pleasant visit – had syrup boiled down and poured upon clean cakes of ice, which, when cooled, formed into wax and was delicious to the taste. We took the chances, and ate heartily, being assured by the clever provider, that it was all right, and would “never go back on us.” “Mac” said his syrup was “superparbonical” – “never known to disagree with his friends.” Correct. We brought home with us a gallon of his choice syrup, which all agree is the best article of the kind ever used at our table. When it comes to whole-soul men, Frank McVey has no superior; and as a syrapiest, he is a success. (*Chatfield Democrat*, Saturday, April 19, 1873, Page 3)



News Nugget 2

Ohio maple sugar – first quality – at G. H. Haven's, for 20 cts a pound. It is a remarkable coincidence that sugar of as good if not better, quality, can be shipped from the east and sold at 5 cents less on the pound than that made in this vicinity. (*Chatfield Democrat*, Saturday, April 19, 1873, Page 3)