

*Exploring Historical Brickmaking in Minnesota*

# Minnesota Bricks

July 2019

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

## Chaska Brick

Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



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

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I collect a lot of postcards, especially those related to early Minnesota or historical Minnesota brick structures. This postcard shows a collage of various Shakopee brick churches and buildings.

# 1. What's New?

- I am not quite as active in producing extra material in the summer. However, I am still finding a ton of information, I just don't have as much time to process it.
- I did have an inquiry into the brick that may have been used in Fort Pembina, North Dakota. I believe the first brickmaker in the State of Minnesota had a hand in it, Daniel F. Brawley. I have a YouTube video about Daniel at <https://www.mnbricks.com/mn-historical-videos/>
- Feel free to send me new information. History is something that can be a lot of work. I can't read every book or visit every historical society in Minnesota, so I appreciate when people send me tips or information.
- You can sign up to automatically receive this newsletter at [www.mnbricks.com](http://www.mnbricks.com)
- If there is something you would like to see added, send me an email at [mnbricks@gmail.com](mailto:mnbricks@gmail.com).



## 2. Photo of the Month



Here is another WOW postcard. This is the Schell Brewery complex at New Ulm, Minnesota. This was likely taken in the early 1900s. Although I have not researched the brewery, I would think it was probably built of local New Ulm brick. Look at the detailed brickwork on the buildings. There is a wagon in the lower right center and an automobile in the lower left.

# 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 pictures of New Ulm, Minnesota. You can find it for purchase on the "Shop" page of my website:

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

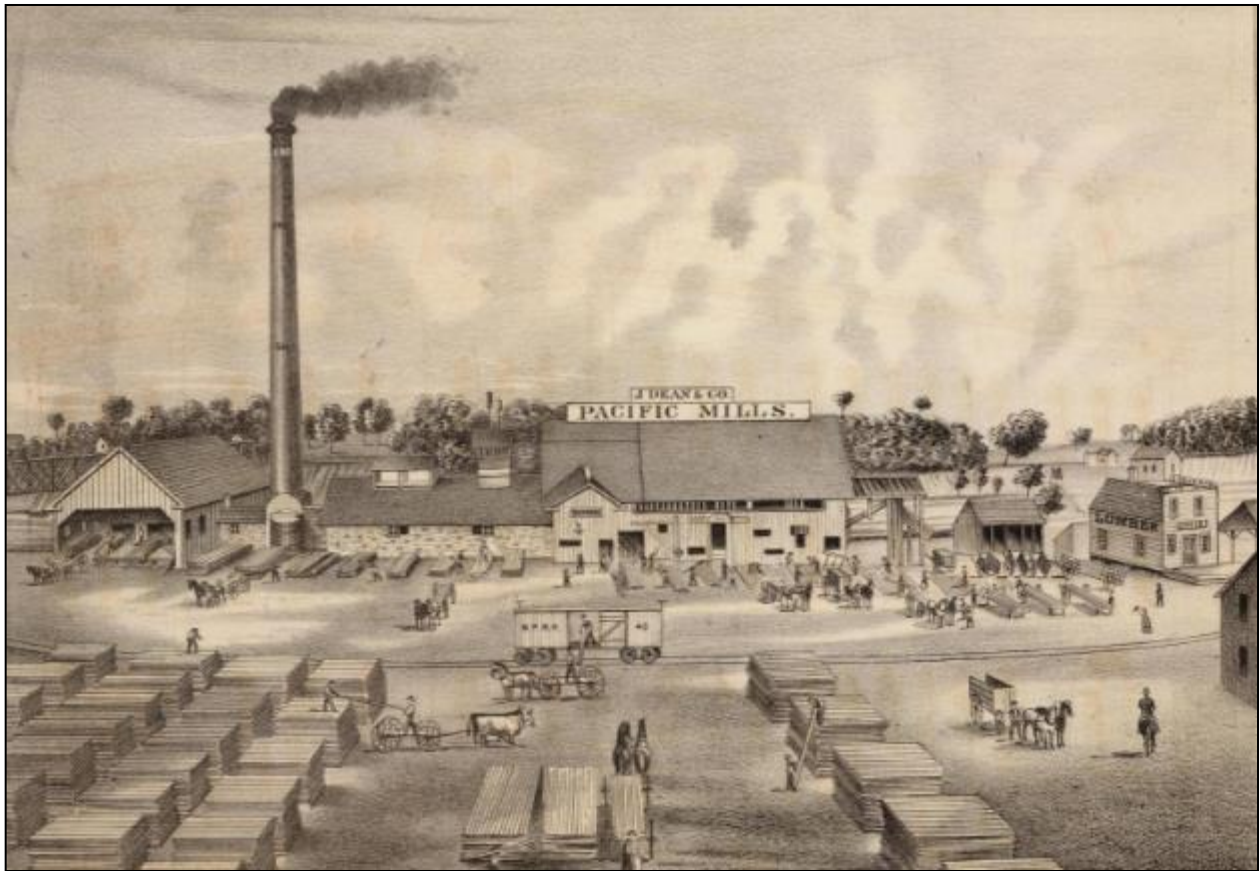
On the same page mentioned above, there are other posters for sale on various brick towns, the historic Minnesota River Valley churches, and the Minnesota Winter of 1880-81.



## 4. A Look Back

### NORTH STAR SHINGLE MILL

MINNESOTA HISTORY SEGMENT



This is a drawing of the Pacific Mills as they appeared in the 1874 Andreas Atlas of Minnesota. Although this is not the North Star Shingle Mill, it does give an idea of the scale and layout of an early Minneapolis lumber yard.

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**North Star Shingle Mill.** Last winter Messrs. Eldred & Spink erected a large and commodious shingle factory in this city, near Bassett's creek, at a cost of \$15,000. The main building in which the machinery and saws are placed, is three stories high, sixty feet in length, and thirty in breadth. At the west side of the main building is an engine house, built of stone, thirty feet wide by forty-five in length.

The engine is seventy-five horse power, manufactured by the Bay State Manufacturing Company of Milwaukee, and was brought to this city, put up, and now run by Mr. Geo. H. Tucker. The engine is a perfect model of beauty, both in movement and workmanship, and in the hands of Mr. Tucker, works to a charm. The logs are drawn from the river into the first story, where they come into contact with a drag, or cross-cut saw, which cuts them into blocks, the requisite length for shingles.

These blocks, as fast as they are cut, come into contact with a large rotary saw, which cuts them into bolts according to the size of the log. This plan is a great improvement on the old style of preparation, as it fits the bolts so that there is no cross-grain shingles. They are then placed into an elevator, that speedily carries them to the third story, when they are manufactured into shingles by the Challoner improved shingle machine.

The shingles, after being cut as fast as can be counted, fall into a slide, which conveys them to a hopper on the second floor, from which they are taken by boys and introduced to the edger, and then thrown to the several packers, who bind and place them on a truck which carries them into the lumber yard. The mill will cut, edge, and daily turn out from 75, to 100,000 shingles in ten hours.

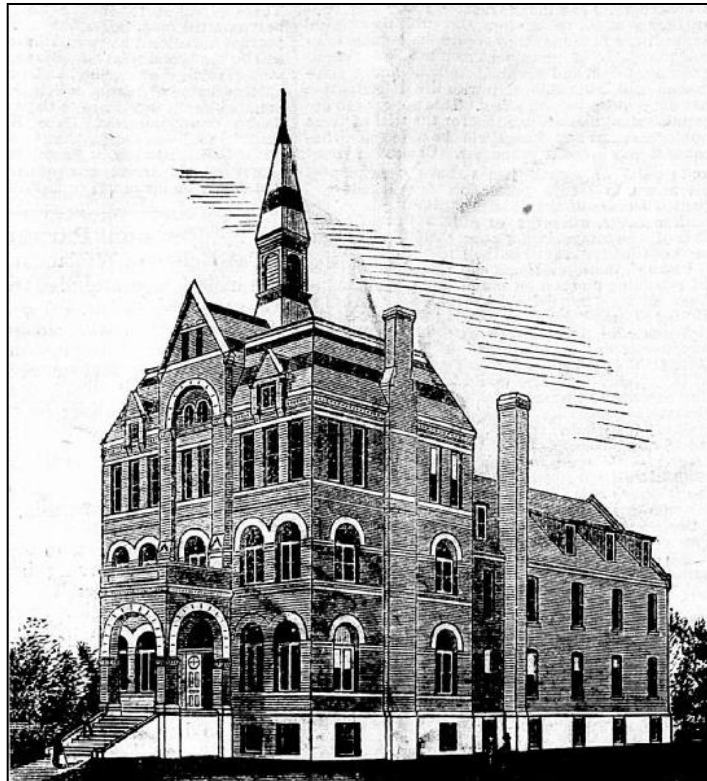
The shingles are of the very best kind, smooth, well matched as can be made. It is truly astonishing to see a huge saw log of two or three feet in diameter, entering the mill, and in a few minutes again turned out in good sound shingles in the yard, ready to cover some man's house or barn. Truly, brains, wood, fire, water and machinery are wonderful things.

It would no doubt astonish some of our old shingle weavers of forty years ago to see the way they make them now-a-days – at Eldred & Spink's shingle factory, under the management of B. B. Gordon. The firm employ twenty-five hands. (*The Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, Wednesday, June 12, 1867, Page 4)

# 5. Brick Structure of the Month



## ALBERT LEA COLLEGE ALBERT LEA, MINNESOTA



The brick for the College walls is now being delivered upon the grounds, and after some necessary work about the foundation, the laying of the walls will commence. A cistern having a capacity of about 400 barrels has just been completed, and the contractors intend to push their work as rapidly as circumstances will permit. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, May 28, 1884, Page 5)

During the past week the workmen have been setting the water tables on the College foundation, and brick-laying has now fairly commenced. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, June 4, 1884, Page 5)

Brick laying on the walls of the College is progressing finely under the energetic management of McCormick & Bond, and no delay in forwarding it to completion will be allowed on their part. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, June 11, 1884, Page 5)

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The roof is being built on the walls of the north wing of the college. The main part is yet to be raised another story. The college building begins to display its majestic proportions. Its slightly walls can be seen for a long distance from all directions. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, July 16, 1884, Page 5)

The steeple of the college has been erected to its position, and the work inside the building is being pushed along expeditiously. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, September 3, 1884, Page 5)

We had the privilege of making a personal inspection of the work inside of Albert Lea College last Sunday and take pleasure in awarding credit to the contractors, McCormick & Bond for the faithful manner in which it has been thus far executed. The rooms are all plastered and hard finished and the wood work is primed with paint. The material used and the honest and skillful character of the work constitute a monument of honor to the workmen and to the city alike. The view from the windows of the tower is a magnificent one. The city, the lakes, trees and fields are spread out before one as a panorama of unrivaled variety and beauty, and furnish a scene fit for the best display of genius in painting and poetry. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, September 17, 1884, Page 5)

Owing to financial difficulties it is now considered as settled that the College cannot be finished and opened as a school this year. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, September 24, 1884, Page 4)

The College building is completed, but for lack of a few hundred dollars we understand it cannot yet be opened for school work. Mr. Abbott, the president is this week endeavoring to collect subscriptions to pay the builders. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, October 22, 1884, Page 5)

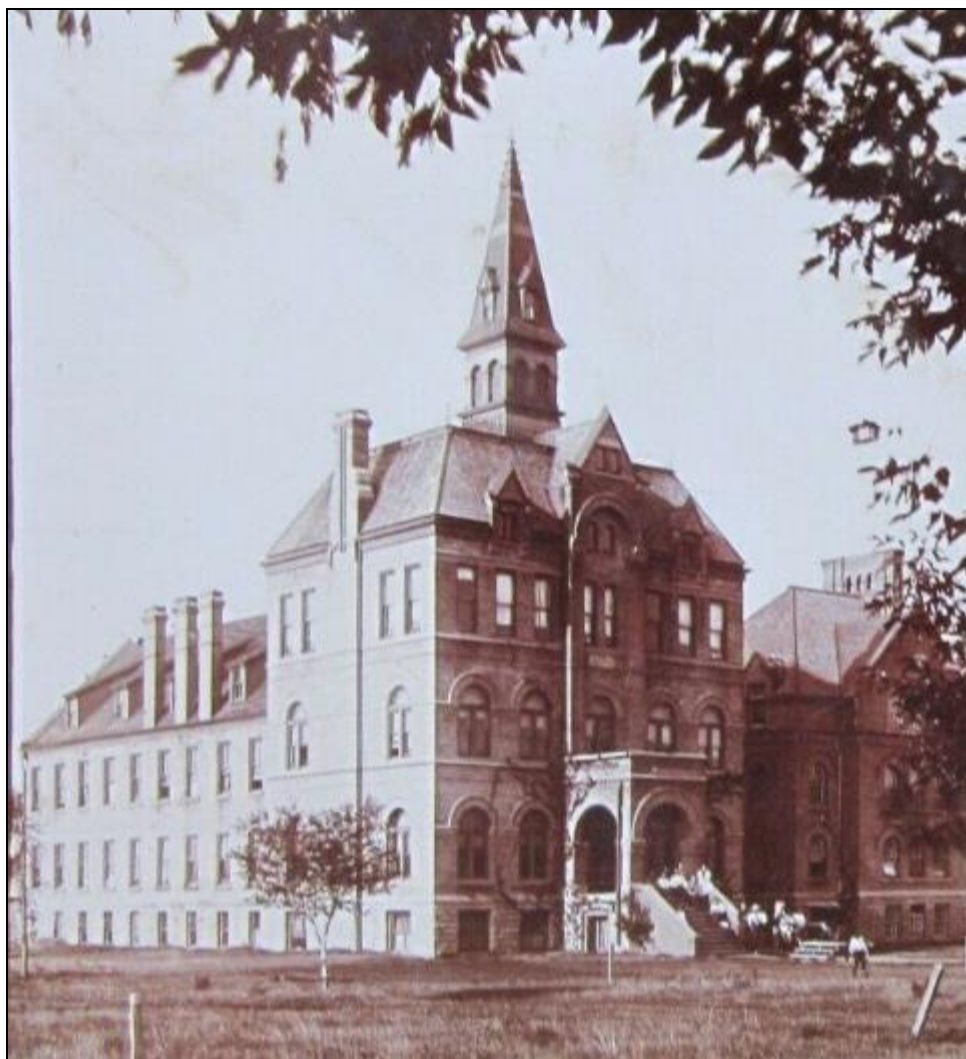
College Arbor Day. The college officers received from Mrs. John Ruble the generous donation of 200 large and very fine hard maple and elm trees, and some butternuts, for the purpose; drayman Freeman and J. E. Simms freely provided the hauling and drayman Chris. Engen provided the mulching. Geo. A. Boye, the faithful sexton of the cemetery, dug up the trees and helped in the work. At noon the earnest and devoted workers began to arrive at the college. The men were provided with spades and shovels and some with rare trees brought from their own gardens, and the ladies unloaded from their carriages capacious lunch baskets, which were deposited in the college dining room. Active operations at once begun in all directions and almost covered the extended eminence about the College building. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, May 6, 1885, Page 1)

The College will open September 8th, and classes will be formed in all studies required by the students; Arithmetic and Grammar included. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, August 19, 1885, Page 5)

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Girls thirteen years of age and upwards will be received in the College the first year. After the first year a more advanced age will be required. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, August 19, 1885, Page 5)

In the afternoon (Saturday) Albert Lea College was formally dedicated, all the members of the Synod and many citizens attending. The exercises were held in the Chapel of the College which was filled to overflowing. Dr. Herrick Johnson's address was one of the most thoughtful and eloquent ever delivered in the state. The 30 young lady students of the College graced the occasion with their presence. Two sentiments were then happily responded to by Dr. McCurdy of Macalister College and by Dr. Rice of St. Paul, when the assemblage adjourned to the College dining room where a sumptuous repast was spread by the citizens of the city. After the repast various toasts were responded to which no pen can fully do justice to. (*Freeborn County Standard*, Albert Lea, Minnesota, Wednesday, October 14, 1885, Page 4)



# 6. News Nuggets

## News Nuggets

The *New Orleans Era* has an interesting account of the blowing up of a sand bar near that city by torpedoes. It says: "Four were exploded, and instead of being seven and eight feet of water at the wharf, there is now from seventeen to twenty. The torpedoes consisted of a sheet iron case, each containing seventy five pounds of powder, placed in a barrel, the space being tightly filled with earth. A heavy weight or sinker was fastened to the bottom, and inserted in the top was a wooden plug, through which the wire passed and connected with an electric battery some distance from the spot where the "machines" were sunk." The experiment was successful. Why is not this a cue for our steamboatmen to try the effect of torpedoes on Beef Slough, Pigs Eye and other bars which obstruct navigation to St. Paul! (*Winona Daily Republican*, Friday, July 22, 1864, Page 3)

There is a great demand for harvest hands, and the inducements offered have tempted many of the laboring men about town to go into the wheat fields. The farmers are offering three dollars per day and board to good hands, and some contracts we learn, have been made at \$3.50. (*Winona Daily Republican*, Saturday, July 23, 1864, Page 3)

The fire on Saturday evening disclosed some traits of character in a portion of our inhabitants which are by no means creditable to them. Usually on occasions of the kind, the first impulse is to render what assistance he may to those whose property is in danger. All other considerations are for the time being overlooked, and only the amount of good that can be done is thought of. Such feelings as this should characterize every one who finds himself in a position where aid can be extended to the unfortunate. It we accept this as true what shall be thought of the hundreds of able-bodied men who on Saturday evening stood by indifferently or absolutely refused to assist in staying the flames that threatened a wide-spread conflagration among their neighbors property? (*Winona Daily Republican*, Monday, August 1, 1864, Page 3)

There arrived in town on Saturday morning last, about forty boys, between the ages of 11 and 18 years, from the News-Boys Lodging House, New York City, under the charge of Mr. C. O'Connor, their Superintendent. These boys have been brought out here under the auspices of a Society, for the purpose of finding them homes. They were taken from the streets of that city and furnished a temporary home, with the object of improving their minds, morals and manners, and so to elevate their tastes that they will desire and seek worthy pursuits and better homes. In bringing them out here it is intended to find for them places where they will be useful and well cared for. (*Winona Daily Republican*, Monday, September 12, 1864, Page 3)

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Mr. J. L. Leonard, of St. Charles, has sent us the following, which we publish for the benefit of whom it may concern: A little boy came to my house on Thursday last, stating that his name is Jerry Hall, is nine years old, and was sent by his mother from La Crosse to meet a man that proposed to adopt him. His mother, he says, was moving somewhere, he knows not where, at the time she put him on the boat at La Crosse. He further states that his father enlisted in the State of New York, and was killed in battle for the Union, and his mother was moving somewhere west at the time she started him from La Crosse; and he has entirely forgotten at what place his parents resided in New York, and also the name of the man that he was to live with. He appears to be a bright amiable child, and I trust that by inserting a notice of the matter you will restore the little wanderer to his kindred. (*Winona Daily Republican*, Saturday, October 29, 1864, Page 3)

Various and sundry small sales and other transactions, not of a strictly commercial character, took place on the street today. Packages of uncertain value were discovered lying around loose and eagerly picked up, to be as suddenly dropped. Coins were seen on the sidewalk and grasped after, but in every instance they eluded the fingers of the discoverer. Marvelous sights were seen in various parts of the heavens, and even on the earth. Some individuals were sent on errands of a not very useful nature, and jokes of all sorts were practiced upon those matter-of-fact and unreflecting persons who had forgotten to charge their minds on arising that this was the first day of April – by long use and practice solemnly dedicated and set aside as All-Fool's Day. (*Winona Daily Republican*, Friday, April 1, 1864, Page 3)

Butter has become such a rarity in this market that when a merchant gets possession of a few pounds he exhibits it in the show windows of his store very much in the style of a Broadway milliner. ...Again – why do not our farmers devote more attention to the dairy? (*Winona Daily Republican*, Tuesday, April 12, 1864, Page 3)

The City Marshal gives notice that the ordinance regulating the several fire districts of the city will hereafter be strictly enforced. Persons whose stove-pipes project through wooden partitions or roofs of buildings, unprotected by chimneys, will do well to take notice. (*Winona Daily Republican*, Wednesday, April 20, 1864, Page 3)

The atmosphere has been full of smoke to-day, caused by the burning of the woods and prairies in the surrounding country. Every evening for a week past, the bluffs on both sides of the river have been encircled with wreaths of flame, presenting in some instances a spectacle of rare beauty. (*Winona Daily Republican*, Wednesday, April 20, 1864, Page 3)

The *Favorite* came up the river to-day with 250 horses for the Second Cavalry regiment. (*Winona Daily Republican*, Wednesday, April 20, 1864, Page 3)

So scarce is help in the harvest fields this year that, we understand, great numbers of the German and Norwegian and Bohemian servant girls have been hired to assist in securing the grain. The high wages offered are a great temptation to them to go, and there is consequently a great scarcity of "help" in the city. (*Winona Daily Republican*, Monday, August 1, 1864, Page 3)