

Exploring Historical Brickmaking in Minnesota

Minnesota Bricks

August 2019

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Chaska Brick

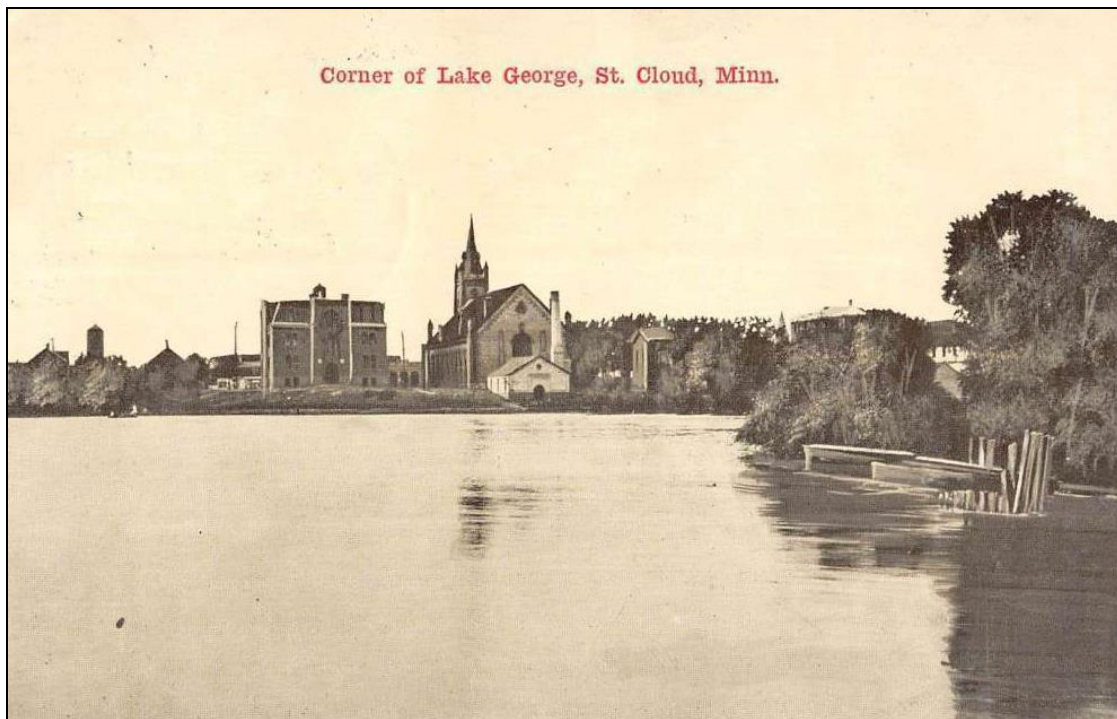
Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



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This shows a church in St. Cloud, Minnesota, located on Lake George. I am not familiar with this specific area in St. Cloud, but it looks like a brick church and school.

1. What's New?

- I received an email from a Hirscher relative, complimenting me on my video of F. X. Hirscher. I still think this is a fascinating story. If you have not watched the video, you can find it at www.mnbricks.com/mn-historical-videos
- In another email, a person in Mahnomen, Minnesota found a brick in their backyard labeled "VANCE," except the "N" was backward. Vance brick were made in Crookston, Minnesota. A very neat find! I have seen a few of these bricks at the Crookston Historical Center.
- I am always looking for new topics or neat subjects. Feel free to contact me at www.mnbricks.com
- If you want to sign up to automatically receive this newsletter via email, you can do so at www.mnbricks.com



**SHARE INFORMATION
& OLD
PHOTOGRAPHS!**

2. Photo of the Month



**Country School, Cairo Township, Renville County,
Minnesota**

This is a stereoview I recently purchased of a group of schoolchildren and their teacher from the late 1800s in Renville County, Minnesota. The teacher looks like a tough customer! The outfits the children are wearing are pretty fascinating as well.

3. For Sale

I have acquired quite a bit of brick silo related material over the years, which include pictures, plans, and various drawings that are quite fascinating.

Shown below is a 20 x 30 inch collage poster showing some of these images. You can purchase it on the “shop” page of my website, www.mnbricks.com/shop

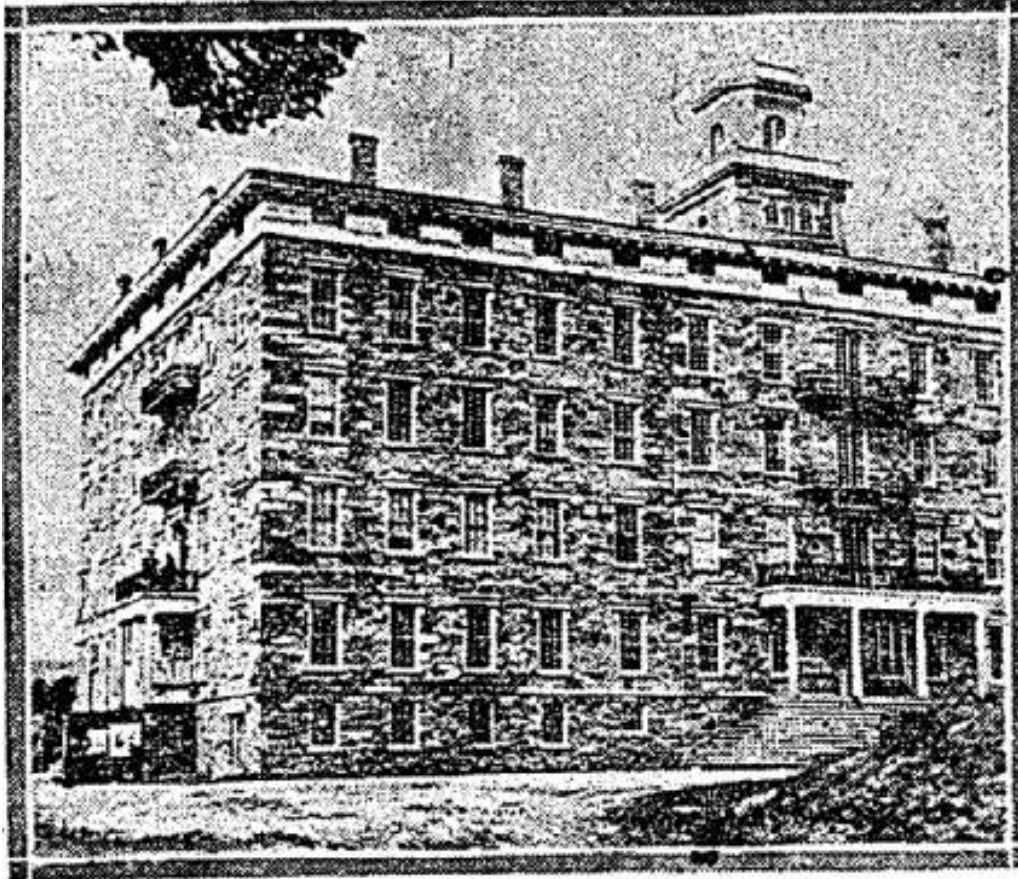
There are other posters for sale on various brick towns, historic Minnesota River Valley churches, and Minnesota brick silos on my shop page as well.



4. A Look Back

THE WINSLOW HOUSE

MINNESOTA HISTORY SEGMENT



In the copy of the 1874 Andreas Atlas of Minnesota I have, there is a panoramic drawing of Minneapolis (shown on the next page), taken from the east side of the Mississippi River in St. Anthony. I never really paid that much attention to where the drawing was made. But if you look at the drawing, you can see it was done from the top of a building. It turns out that this building was the Winslow House (Hotel) in St. Anthony. The building was not made of brick, but rather of the local blue limestone. The following pages give more information about the Winslow House (shown above).

Continued on the next page...



On the top of the Winslow House in St. Anthony, looking across the Mississippi River at Minneapolis.

The most famous of the hotel in St. Anthony was the Winslow house, built in 1856 on a beautiful site overlooking the falls, the present location of the Old Exposition building. It was erected by James M. Winslow of St. Paul and cost over \$100,000, an unheard of sum for this period. In design, it was another example of that hideous pseudo-architecture which abounded in the West at this time. It was five stories high and built of gray limestone. Its facade, with its small front porch, approached by an ugly flight of steep stone steps, was anything but imposing. The Winslow house was furnished at a cost of \$60,000. A few weeks after its opening in June, 1858, it was sold to C. W. McLean of Boston for \$160,000. (*The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, Sunday, October 8, 1922, Section 16, Page 8)

At the time when that picture was taken [the 1874 Andreas Atlas photograph], the Winslow house was occupied by Jesus college, a branch of the University of Minnesota. Ten years earlier, however, Winslow house had been one of the finest hotels in the West, largely patronized in the summer months by wealthy Southerners, who came up the Mississippi river with their families and slaves to spend their summers. (*The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, Sunday, September 14, 1919, Section 14, Page 1)

On the next two pages, you can read a personal account of someone who stood on the top of the Winslow House, and wrote an article on what they observed. You almost feel like you were there too!

Continued on the next page...

The “Winslow House.” This is a Minnesota institution, of which all Minnesotians are in duty bound to be proud. It is in the city of St. Anthony, situated on an eminence overlooking the falls, and from its observatory commanding a series of magnificent views. The twin cities of St. Anthony and Minneapolis lay at our feet, with Nicollet Island, the proposed future Capital of the State, now crowned with a dense forest, lying a little above the Falls; and many bright gleams of the flashing river in its bed of pearl, when we saw it [in the winter], making a gorgeous panorama; and one we can imagine as still more inviting when the pearl is exchanged for emerald [during the warm season].

The graded line of the railroad from Stillwater, opening a view through the bluffs and forests to the eastern horizon, readily suggests its idea of a path for the sunrise of civilization to flow in upon the wilderness, lying in full view to the West. On the one side lie millions of acres of the most inviting and fertile land on this continent, inhabited by bears, wolves, elk, buffalo and the ‘the ilk;’ [the like or similar] and to the other side, we look straight down the pathway of that great magician, “the iron horse” which is shortly to cover these broad acres with thousands and thousands of happy, prosperous homes for the honest sons and daughters of toil, who now work for the privilege of living on the smallest possible portions of man’s heritage, this green and glorious earth.

It is difficult while standing in the observatory, looking over the broad expanse of country so sparsely occupied, thinking of its unrivalled natural advantages, and of the almost interminable succession of rich prairies and woodlands, lakes and rivers rolling on and on to the Rocky Mountains and offering homes and broad farms for the price of a ball dress, to understand why it is that millions of the human race, even in our own favored land, are groping away their lives in damp cellars and dark, rocking alleys. When millions of hands want acres, and millions of acres want hands, “there must be something wrong.” We have never been so impressed upon this, as in the five moments we stood upon that observatory with the whole Mississippi at our feet converted into a mill race, capable of doing the manufacturing for a continent, with the horizon shutting down upon a country we know to be lying in an atmosphere the most healthful and invigorating, and capable of raising bread, and supplying sunny homes for uncounted millions, and remembering the cry for bread and work which is coming up from our eastern cities, how we longed to see that open path to sunrise illuminated by the fiery eye of that great civilizer, as he comes careening along with his long trains of home and health seekers, who must shortly pour along its iron way.

But the “Winslow House” itself! There is something of it beside the observatory. Down below are stories upon stories – we do not remember how many – of cosy [cozy] chambers, pleasant dressing rooms and long halls, all finished and furnished in a style of luxury which is seldom equaled in first class Eastern hotels. The house is built of a handsome bluish stone and the walls are about three feet thick of solid masonry. This gives it an air of imposing grandeur, such as one connects with the idea of old ancestral castles, while the high ceilings, large and numerous windows, and predominance of white and bright coloring in walls and furniture takes away all thought of the gloom usually attached to massive buildings. In fact, we have never, in any place, seen a house where French luxury and sprightliness were so combined with English solidity and comfort.

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The "Winslow House" must become a favorite resort for invalids and pleasure seekers. The Allegheny Mountain air, to which invalids resort for health, is not nearly so pure and invigorating as our Minnesota atmosphere, while the opportunities for boating, riding, driving and hunting and all manner of out door exercises are unsurpassable. When invalids can enjoy this, with the luxurious comfort and quiet of such a hotel – if there are any more such – thousands must learn to avail themselves of it. While at the "Winslow" we did not hear a loud word, a rattle of an impudent bell, or clatter of any kind – no noise or confusion any more than in the most orderly private family.

True, the house was not full, but there were plenty of guests to have got up a tremendous rush, if the whole machinery of the establishment had not been working on greased hinges – had not been properly arranged and thoroughly managed. The thickness of the walls and softness of the carpets do much to insure quiet; but the gentlemanly supervision of the clerk, Capt. Darrow; and orderly movements of the servants make confusion impossible. The halls are heated and the cooking principally done by steam. Two superb pianos furnish visitors with an opportunity for home sounds; and the culinary department is in that perfection; that even the bread, butter, cream, tea and coffee are of the first quality. (*St. Cloud Democrat*, Thursday, December 9, 1858, Page 2)

THE WINSLOW HOUSE
At the Falls is now open for the reception of Boarders and Tourists. Its large spacious halls and airy rooms make it a very desirable place of resort during the hot months. Also, Rooms to rent to small families, suitable for housekeeping.
may 33 d2w

5. News Nuggets

The splendid steamer, Northern Belle ran on to a snag just below this city, last Sunday morning on her down trip, knocking a hole in the starboard side of her bow, some eight feet in length, through which the water rushed at a frightful rate. She was headed at once for shallow water and her bow soon struck in about four feet of water. The pumps were manned and worked to their utmost capacity, but they were unable to prevent the afterpart of the vessel from sinking slowly. The G. H. Wilson came down very opportunely, and was lashed to the Belle; a tarpaulin was passed under the bow of the Belle and drawn over the opening in her side, partially stopping the leak; a bulk head was built around the leak, and her own pumps, with the assistance of a powerful force pump on the Wilson, capable of throwing sixty barrels of water a minute, soon relieved her of all the water in her hold save that confined in the bulk head, and she was enabled to leave some time in the night. (*The Wabasha Weekly Herald*, Thursday, September 6, 1866, Page 4)

Gen. Warren's surveying party have been "working up the river" from Read's to Beef Slough, during the past week. We have not heard anything of the result of their observations with regard to Beef Slough, but learned the following items with regard to the river above, that may be of interest to our readers: The greatest fall in the river between Prescott and this city, is in the slough, below Read's, commencing at the mill and running down a mile, the fall is one foot and 1-10. The depth of water in the main channel, to the foot of Lake Pepin, was nowhere less than five feet – and most of the way seven to twelve feet. The soundings in the Lake, gave 35 feet as the shallowest, 65 feet as the deepest, and 45 feet as a sort of half way station. The Wacouta bar can be avoided by going up the slough on the east side of the Island, where a channel was found with a depth of water of from seven to twenty feet. It would seem, then, that between Beef Slough and Prescott bars (on the latter of which there is only two and a half feet of water), there is no serious impediment to navigation. We await with interest the completion of the survey, and the publication of General Warren's report. (*The Wabasha Weekly Herald*, Thursday, October 4, 1866, Page 4)

The steamer Julia broke her wheel last Friday, while crossing from this city to the woodyard opposite. She lay at the yard some six hours repairing the damage. On her return trip she broke her wheel again, just as she was leaving Buffalo City, detaining her some four hours at that place. (*The Wabasha Weekly Herald*, Thursday, October 4, 1866, Page 4)

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**News Nuggets
from the late 1800s**

Last Friday, as the steamer Julia was repairing her broken wheel at the woodyard, opposite this city, one of the strikers, who was assisting the carpenter, fell into the river and being unable to swim came near drowning. He was caught by one of the workmen just as he came to the surface and taken on board where he was soon restored. (*The Wabasha Weekly Herald*, Thursday, October 4, 1866, Page 4)

At Read's Landing the warehousemen have paid as high as fifty cents an hour for laborers to handle freight, and have found it difficult to obtain help at those figures. (*The Wabasha Weekly Herald*, Thursday, October 18, 1866, Page 1)

Last week Joseph Rock of this city, killed two bear, and seven deer, besides hooking three hundred trout and bagging one hundred pheasants. Mr. Rock's hunting ground was in the vicinity of Plum Creek, about fifteen miles from this city. (*The Wabasha Weekly Herald*, Thursday, December 27, 1866, Page 1)

We have a supply of stone for building purposes within a stone's throw of the city. There can of course be no limit to the stone in Quarry Bluff and the immense excavations that have been made during the past year have shown the quality of the rock to grow better, as the excavation extends. The stone comes from the quarry in such shapes as to require but little work to fit it for use, and is susceptible of a fine finish and is durable as granite. This with the cheapness of lumber which the location of the city will always ensure, renders its facilities for building unsurpassed in the State. (*The Wabasha Weekly Herald*, Thursday, December 27, 1866, Page 1)

You that make a practice during the winter of depositing the old, odd-ends from your shops, and the garbage from your kitchens and cellars in the streets, thinking that the foul mass with either freeze, or be covered with snow, have got something to do, now that the warm days have rendered your premises and streets adjacent, in a condition "most foul and unnatural." If you be civilized men – you will cleanse your premises at once from their sweating mass of decaying matter. (*The Wabasha Weekly Herald*, Thursday, April 11, 1867, Page 4)

Plainview. Gopher Hunt. For weeks, boys and men have been engaged in the slaughter of these little fellows, until the war was almost one of extermination and the tails have been carefully preserved for the grand count which took place yesterday. A "Gopher Day" on the prairie is an acknowledged holiday. Schools are let out and the boys, in their Sunday best, find their way to town at an early hour, with the holiday allowance of peanut money, or if they are not blessed with generous paternals, they come with pockets well lined with the caudal appendages of the said gophers, which they sell to the side that will pay the most. At an early hour the crowd began to pour in on foot and horseback and in every description of vehicle, and by noon the streets were full. Each party on arriving, deposited their counts in some ones safe to avoid their being confiscated by the other side, and then turned their attention to the athletic sports which the prairie boys generally excel in, such as wrestling, jumping, foot-racing, lifting, &c. (*The Wabasha Weekly Herald*, Thursday, June 6, 1867, Page 1)

6. Brick Structure of the Month



THE SIDLE HOUSE MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA



My choice for the August brick structure of the month is the Sidle house of Minneapolis. The Sidle house was constructed of local cream colored Minneapolis brick, and was a mansion in its time. I have seen old photographs of it, and it was an impressive place. There is more information about the Sidle House on the following pages.

Continued on the next page...

Mr. H. G. Sidle has commenced operations on his elegant new brick residence, corner Nicollet and Fifth streets. It will be one of the finest residences in the city and will cost \$15,000. (*The Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, Friday, May 7, 1869, Page 4)

...Henry Sidle, ornamental brick villa, iron window sills and caps, and stable complete – the most costly residence of the year, [\$]18,000... (*Minneapolis Daily Tribune*, Saturday, February 5, 1870, Page 2)

I believe the house was torn down in the late 1870s or 1880s to make room for other businesses.

Henry Sidle died August 13, 1898. The paragraphs below were taken from his obituary.

Henry Godfrey Sidle was born in York, Pa., July 22, 1822. He was the youngest of three sons born to Henry and Susannah Kootz Sidle. The elder brother was the late J. K. Sidle, so many years known both in the store in Pennsylvania, and in the bank in Minneapolis. His great-grandfather, Godfrey Sidle, whose name he bears, was a native of Hamburgh, Germany, whence he emigrated to this country in the early part of the last century. His grandfather served in the army of the Revolution. The Sidles were farmers of laborious and thrifty habits. Henry Sidle learned the trade of blacksmith, but engaged in merchandise, to which he trained his sons.

Henry had the advantage of the sons of thrifty families of his time in the public schools of York, and at the age of 17 was taken into the store. After a clerkship of 11 years his father relinquished the business to his two sons, J. K. and Henry, who conducted it on joint account for the next 13 years. They had a large and prosperous trade and enjoyed the confidence and patronage of the community where they had grown to manhood. But, like so many ambitious young men, they became dissatisfied with the limitations of an Eastern town, though so thriving one as was York, and longed for the more abundant opportunities and broader field for enterprise in the West.

In 1857 J. K. Sidle made a tour through the West, and in Minneapolis found the conditions and prospects which satisfied him and determined him to locate here. He had associated with him, Peter Wolford, a wealthy capitalist of York county. They opened a private banking house under the style of Sidle, Wolford & Co. Upon the completion of the Nicollet House, the firm took one of the offices on the ground floor fronting Washington avenue, and occupied it for many years. Henry continued to carry on the store at York, but visited his brother in 1853 and made observations of the place and its prospects, determined not to relinquish a prosperous business until he had practical demonstration that a better one awaited him.

Continued on the next page...

This was soon furnished by the prosperity which attended the new banking firm, and in 1863 the store at York was sold, and Henry joined his brother in Minneapolis, and entered the banking firm, in which, however, he had an interest from the start. In 1865 the banking firm of Sidle, Wolford & Co. was dissolved, Mr. Wolford engaging in other business. The Sidle brothers now organized a bank, under a state charter, with the name of Minneapolis Bank, with a capital of \$50,000. It issued circulating notes and carried on a regular banking business of deposit, discount and circulation. J. K. Sidle was president and H. G. Sidle was cashier. When the national banking system was established, taxing the circulating notes of state banks out of existence, the First National Bank of Minneapolis was organized in 1865, and the business of the Minneapolis bank transferred to it.

It was the continuation of the old bank under a new name, with the same capital, officers and business. The bank was very successful at the start, and has always enjoyed the fullest confidence of the community. Its chief officers were indefatigable in their attention to its interests, and confined the operations to the legitimate business in which they were engaged. They never speculated or engaged in outside operations except as an investment of surplus capital. The capital of the bank was successively increased, as its enlarging business required, to \$100,000, \$400,000, \$600,000, and finally, about 1879, to \$1,000,000.

While the bank was always managed by the Sidles, so that it was familiarly spoken of as Sidle's bank, it had nevertheless a substantial board of directors, who represented in the fullest degree the conservative and substantial element of business in Minneapolis. Upon the lamented death of J. K. Sidle in 1888, the board of directors unanimously elected H. G. Sidle to the presidency, and appointed his two sons, Henry K. and Charles K., cashier and assistant cashier. (*The Minneapolis Tribune*, Sunday, August 14, 1898, Page 7)

