

Exploring Historical Brickmaking in Minnesota

Minnesota Bricks

January 2020

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www.mnbricks.com

Chaska Brick

Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



www.chaskabrick.com

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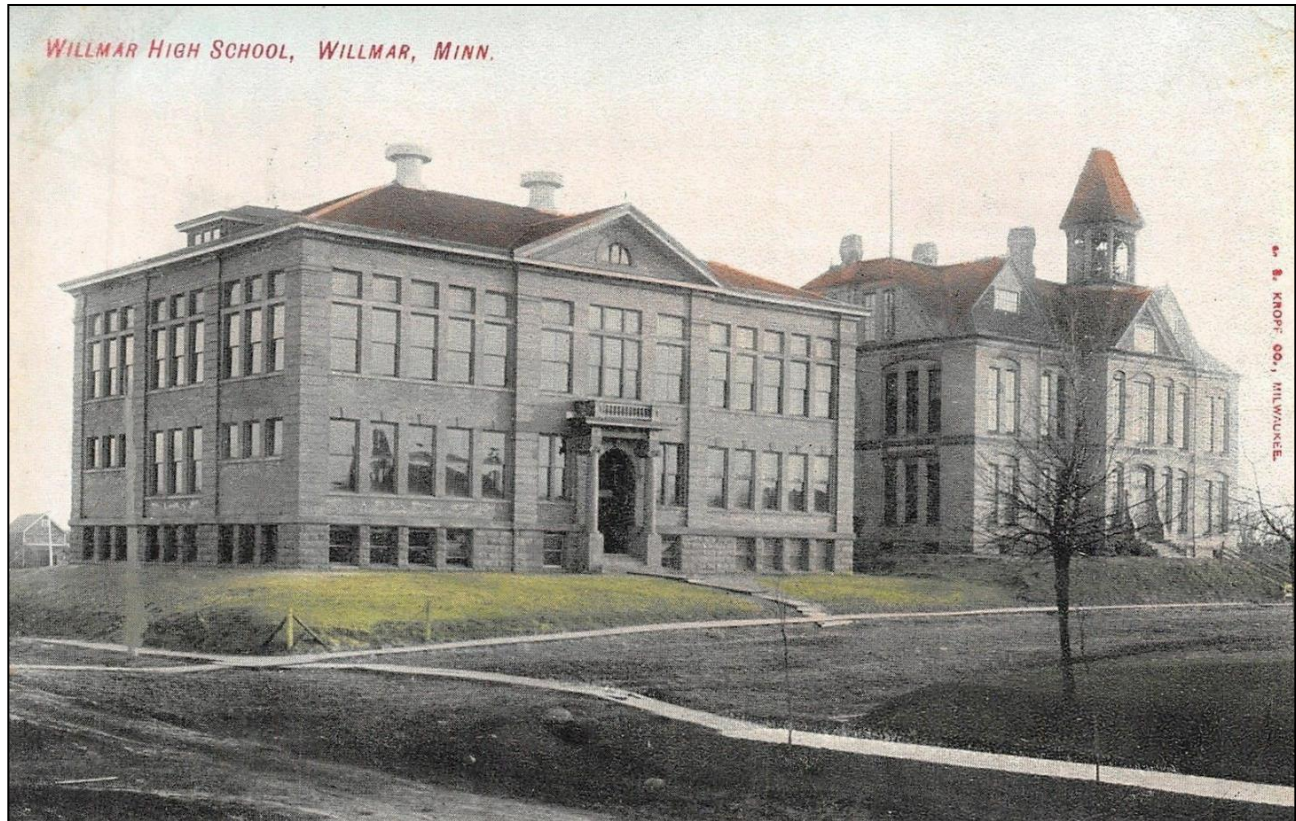
Bands were incredibly popular back in the late 1800s. They accompanied expeditions on steamboats and provided the music for dances. The postcard shown above was taken in the early 1900s and shows a band from International Falls, Minnesota.

1. What's New?

- I heard from a reader in the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, area, who has an ACO silo on their property. It's one of the furthest southwest ones I know of!
- I also received an inquiry about the Sprandel family of Little Falls, Minnesota. Little Falls brick were made west-southwest of town, and were a cream color. There are still many brick buildings in downtown Little Falls.
- 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
- If there is something you would like to see added, send me an email at mnbricks@gmail.com.



2. Photo of the Month



This is a postcard of two schools at Willmar, Minnesota, built right next to each other. The school on the right is the older of the two, showing a fancier architecture. The school on the left is the newer one, with a more modern architecture. I like the older style building, with the bell tower. These older buildings also featured intricate brick work. There are not many of these older type school houses left, but I have seen one still standing in Tyler, 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 pictures of New Ulm, Minnesota. You can find it for purchase on the "Shop" page of my website:

www.mnbricks.com/shop

On the same page, 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

OYSTERS?

MINNESOTA HISTORY SEGMENT

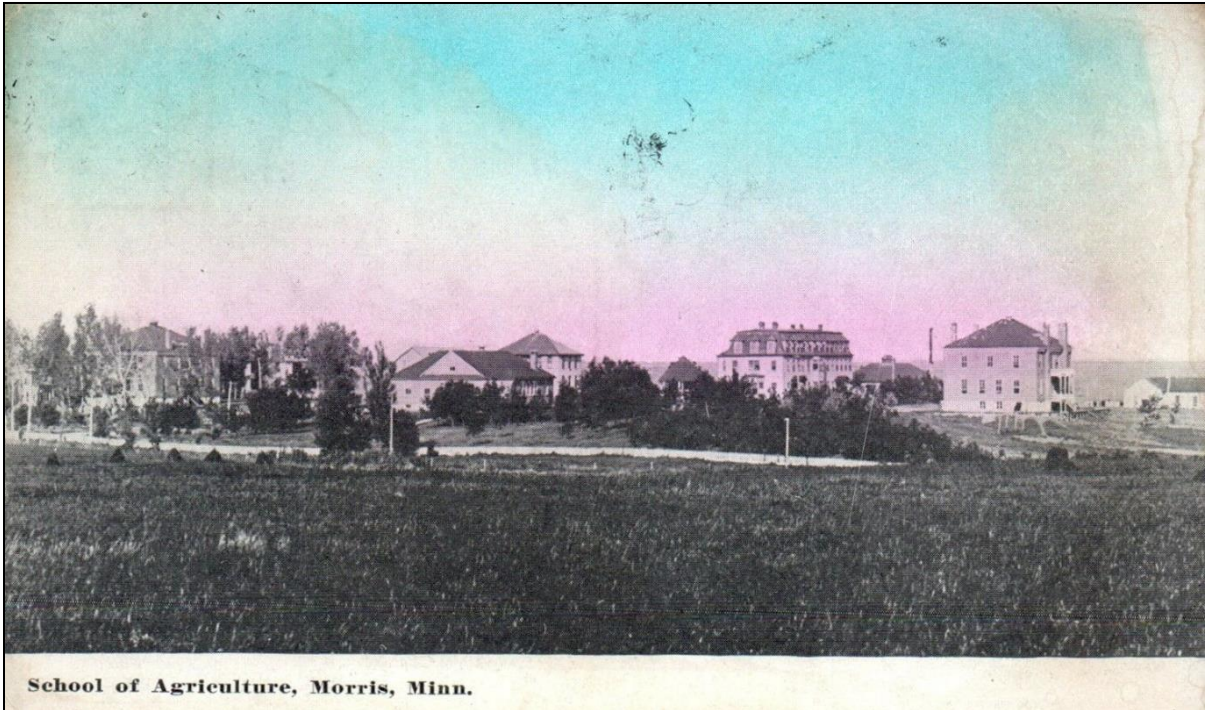
BILL OF FARE.
Soup—Mock Turtle, Mulligatawney.
Fish—Boiled Pike, Lobster Sauce, Baked Pick-
erel, Claret Sauce.
Roast—Beef, Chicken, Pork, Veal, Mutton,
Turkey, Pig, Ham, Champagne Sauce.
Boiled—Capons, Celery Sauce, Duffield Ham,
Corned Beef, Turkey, Oyster Sauce, Leg Mutton,
Caper Sauce, Smoked Tongue.
Game—Venison, Elk, Bear, Goose, Apple
Sauce, Grouse, Rabbits, Boar's Head.
Entrees—Maccaroni Au Gratin, Hashed Chick-
ens with Poached Eggs, Fricassee Chicken with
Oysters, Kidney Broiled ala Macedoine, Tender
Loin of Pork, Sauce Piquant, Fillet of Lamb,
ala Royale, Chicken Currie, ala Indienne, Pinions
stewed with Parsnips, Cotelettes of Venison with
Jelly.
Vol au Vent—Pheasants, Gibblets, Rabbits,
Chickens.
Cold Dishes—Spiced Ham, Buffalo Tongue,
Pressed Corn Beef, Beef ala Mode.
Pastry—Apple, Mince, Peach, Cranberry and
Crab Apple Pies, Green Peach, Apple and Crau-
berry Tarts.
Dessert—Sponge Pudding, Pound Pudding,
Charlotte Russe, English Cream, Meringers with
Cream, Blanc Mange, Venilla Cream, Lemon Jelly,
Maderia, Rum and Port Wine Jelly, Pound,
Sponge, and Fruit Cake.
Fruits—Almonds, Raisins, Figs, Filberts, Ap-
ples, English Walnuts.
Tea and Coffee.

When I look through old Minnesota newspapers from the late 1800s, I constantly come across advertisements for oysters and oyster dinners. I never really understood why until I came across the following story, and menu [shown above]. "Nearly two hundred New Englanders, the descendants of New Englanders and others, sat down to a sumptuous entertainment at the Winslow House [hotel], on Saturday evening, last[,] to commemorate the landing of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock, in the year 1620." (*The Minnesota Weekly Times*, St. Paul, Tuesday, December 29, 1855, Page 1) The new settlers in Minnesota had come from New England, where seafood was a main staple. The settlers were also very patriotic. Doesn't this dinner sound elegant?

5. Brick Structure of the Month



WILLMAR AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL WILLMAR, MINNESOTA

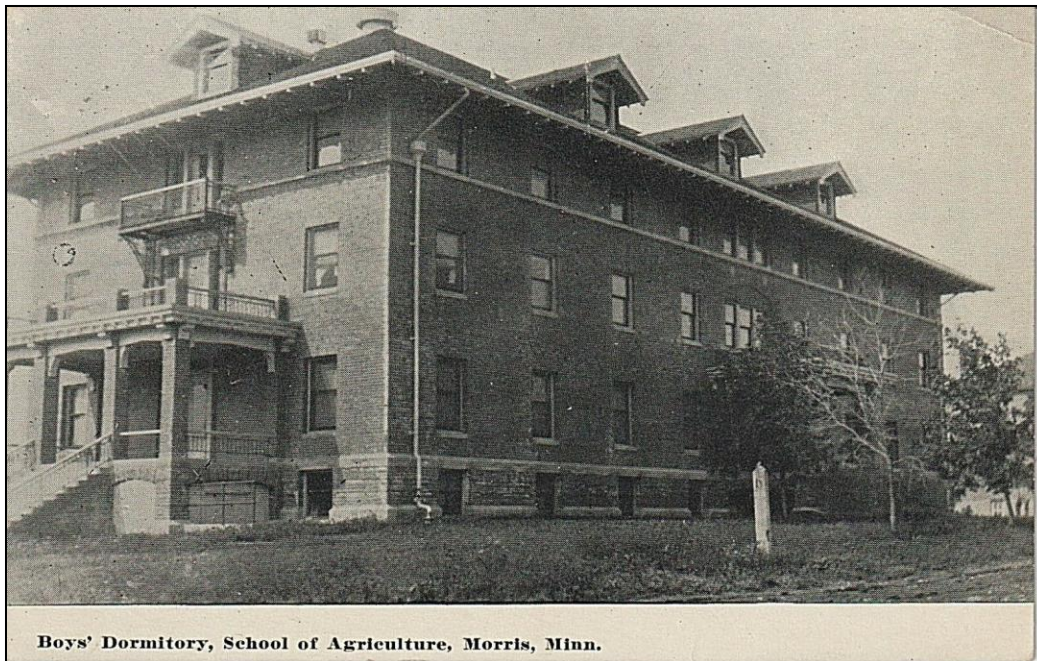


This is a postcard of the school of agriculture at Morris, Minnesota, in the early 1900s. The complex started as a school for Native Americans, but as the need for training the new generation of farmers and other Minnesotans grew, it became an agricultural school. Today it is known as the University of Minnesota Morris.

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The news article below talks a little about the history of the Willmar school. Many of the buildings in the complex were built of brick, but at this point, I am unsure where the bricks came from. Willmar did have several brickyards then.

Want Good School. Agricultural School Will Be Made Ready to Open Next Fall. Hon. A. E. Rice, of Willmar, member of the university [of Minnesota] board of regents, and Prof. D. D. Mayne, of the state agricultural school at St. Anthony, were in Morris on Wednesday and inspected the plant of the erstwhile Indian school with a view to its use as an agricultural school. They were met by a number of citizens, and after inspecting the school, expressed themselves frankly in a way that may be regarded as reflecting the attitude of the state officials towards this school. In the first place, the matter of opening the school this fall was dismissed from consideration for the reason that there is not time to make the necessary changes, and for the further reason that it is desired that the school be not given an unfavorable standing at the very start. Regent Rice regarded it as imperative that \$10,000 be spent in repairs, in rearranging the dormitories and the heating and in other minor repairs, and that very soon it will be necessary for the state to spend \$30,000 or \$40,000 for more buildings here – especially for additional dormitories. All this means that the state will have to make much heavier appropriations than the \$10,000 appropriated last session. But while Mr. Rice talked so discouragingly of the immediate prospects of the school, he as freely mentioned its bright prospects for the future. He is well pleased with the location of the school and with the farm land attached to and contiguous to it. The quality of the soil here is superior to the soil of the farm land at the other schools, and much better adapted for experimental work. For this reason and for the further reason that there is such a large farming population in this section of the state, he regards the future of the school as assured. The visit of Dr. Rice is an assurance to the friends of the school that the school is going to receive fair treatment and will in due time grow into one of the best if not the best agricultural school in the state. (*Morris Tribune*, Saturday, September 18, 1909, Page 1)



Boys' Dormitory, School of Agriculture, Morris, Minn.

6. News Nuggets

News Nuggets

Our market has been well supplied for a few days past with fine, luscious blackberries, of native growth – the first we have seen in Minnesota. We learn that on either shore of the St. Croix – between this place and Taylor’s Falls – they are found in great abundance. Cranberries are also coming into market in abundance, and we understand the crop will be fine and abundant. (*The Stillwater Messenger*, Tuesday, August 24, 1858, Page 3)

We regret to learn that five stacks of grain – three of wheat and two of oats – belonging to Mr. Patrick Whaling, residing on the prairie a few miles south of town, were burned a few days since. The stacks contained six or seven hundred bushels. The fire was communicated from the careless use of a pipe in the hands of one of the laborers. (*The Stillwater Messenger*, Tuesday, August 24, 1858, Page 3)

The season is now upon us when the greatest danger of destructive fires is to be apprehended. Hundreds of rooms that have been unoccupied by fires for months past are now being prepared for winter use; and before this is done, the greatest precaution should be observed to ascertain that chimneys, flues &c. are in a safe condition for use. (*The Stillwater Messenger*, Tuesday, November 16, 1858, Page 3)

A gentleman extensively engaged in the produce business in this city, informs us that the cranberry trade of the St. Croix Valley during the past season amounted to not less than ten thousand dollars. Five thousand bushels is the estimated product, netting the producers two dollars per bushel. The berries in this vicinity are usually of a superior quality, and the trade is increasing from year to year. (*The Stillwater Messenger*, Tuesday, January 25, 1859, Page 3)

A number of our citizens, (Messrs. Holcombe & Leach, Esqs.,) are now constructing four large flat-bottomed boats, or barges, at the head of the Lake, for the purpose of packing and shipping ice to St. Louis. The boats will be built and packed on the ice, obviating the necessity of re-handling and exposing the ice at the time of shipment. The capacity of the boats will be 125 tons each, making 500 tons. The ice is now 20 inches in thickness, and is very pure and compact. (*The Stillwater Messenger*, Tuesday, March 1, 1859, Page 3)

For the past few days the prairies and woodland on the east side of the St. Croix have been on fire. On Friday evening last the long serpentine lines of fire, creeping over the high bluffs, presented a grand scene from the city. (*The Stillwater Messenger*, Tuesday, April 26, 1859, Page 3)

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The Minnesota River boats are about as lively these days as black birds. They have all they can do carrying freight and passengers. (*The Minnesota Weekly Times*, St. Paul, Tuesday, October 31, 1854, Page 1)

One year ago, the present month, we passed over the prairie land where now stands Minneapolis. Then we counted within the range of our vision, from the top of the stage, all told, ten houses. We passed over the same ground a few days since, and counted one church, nearly a dozen stores, and from fifty to seventy-five dwellings. (*The Minnesota Weekly Times*, St. Paul, Tuesday, October 31, 1854, Page 3)

We learn that Hon. H. M. Rice has contracted for 80,000 of the Minneapolis brick, for the purpose of erecting a building in St. Anthony street. We hear of other gentlemen in St. Paul talking of using the same brick for building purposes. (*The Minnesota Weekly Times*, St. Paul, Tuesday, November 7, 1854, Page 2)

At least two hundred new buildings have been erected in St. Paul since the opening of navigation. Building operations have not been confined to one but to all parts of the city; nor are the buildings small, but many of them are of brick, well built and commodious. (*The Minnesota Weekly Times*, St. Paul, Tuesday, November 7, 1854, Page 3)

The population of Red Wing in this Territory, is estimated at three hundred. But a few years ago scarcely a decent house could be seen in that neighborhood. (*The Minnesota Weekly Times*, St. Paul, Tuesday, November 7, 1854, Page 3)

The Eating Saloon recently opened under the Winslow House [hotel], has all the requisites necessary to make it popular. It is fitted up in Eastern style, and it is the intention of the proprietor to keep on hand the luxuries found in similar establishments [in the] East. His oysters are fresh from the shell, and are cooked to order. (*The Minnesota Weekly Times*, St. Paul, Tuesday, November 28, 1854, Page 2)

We want a Wood Yard in St. Paul - a place where our citizens can go and order their Wood, either dry or green, cut or uncut, hard or soft, good, bad or indifferent, it being understood that prices shall range accordingly. Such a yard would not only be a great convenience to our citizens, but a source of profit to the proprietor. It is well-known that during the winter season it is almost impossible to get such wood as is wanted, unless high prices are paid, and then at some considerable inconvenience. Now if we had a Wood Yard, all that would be necessary would be to leave our orders, assured that they would be filled at a certain time, and give ourselves no further uneasiness. In a few years wood will be much scarcer than now, and unless some such system is adopted, we shall be much annoyed in the purchase of our fuel. (*The Minnesota Weekly Times*, St. Paul, Tuesday, November 28, 1854, Page 2)

The *St. Peters Courier* of Thursday the 25th, states that four Germans have recently deserted Fort Ridgely. Lieut. Hawkins, with a party of soldiers went in pursuit and caught two of the men at Traverse; the other two were captured at Shakopee, and all four conveyed back to the fort. (*The Minnesota Weekly Times*, St. Paul, Tuesday, February 6, 1855, Page 2)