

Exploring Historical Brickmaking in Minnesota

Minnesota Bricks

August 2020

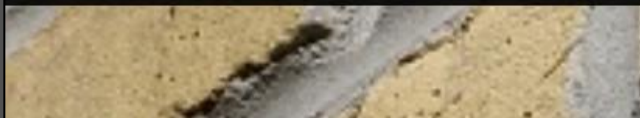
Minnesota Bricks

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www.mnbricks.com

Chaska Brick

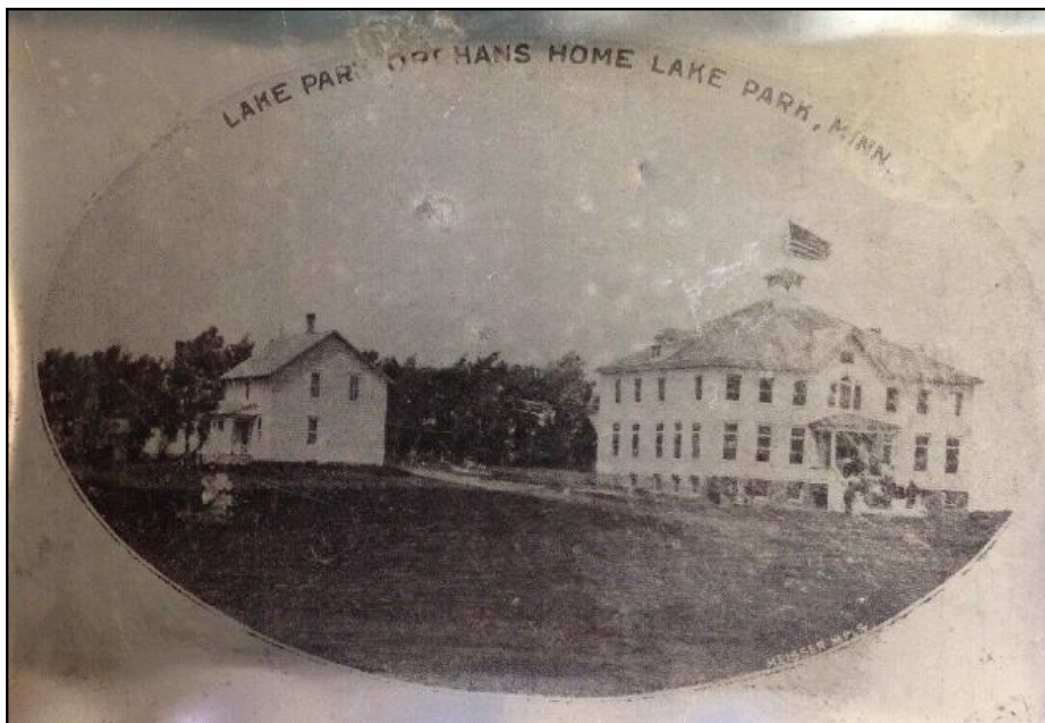
Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



www.chaskabrick.com

Contents

1. What's New?	3
2. Photo of the Month	4
3. For Sale	5
4. A Look Back	6
5. News Nuggets	9
6. Brick Structure of the Month	13



This is a picture of the Lake Park Lutheran Children's Home at Lake Park, Minnesota. This complex had a double ACO silo and barn on it.

1. What's New?

- I finished part 3 of my 5 part video series on the brickyard history of Chaska, Minnesota. Thank you to the Chaska Historical Society for providing several pictures that I used in the video. If you watch the video and have a comment, I would love to hear it. The video is found at: www.mnbricks.com/mn-historical-videos
- The Grand Forks ACO silo that I featured several issues ago has been torn down. The entire farm complex was recently bulldozed, to make room for new commercial development. I tried to get the landowner to save the ACO letters from the silo, to no avail.
- Feel free to contact me at www.mnbricks.com about any new topics or subjects. If you like what you see, tell others about it!
- If you want to sign up to automatically receive this newsletter via email, you can do so at www.mnbricks.com



2. Photo of the Month



Olmsted County Courthouse, Rochester, Minnesota

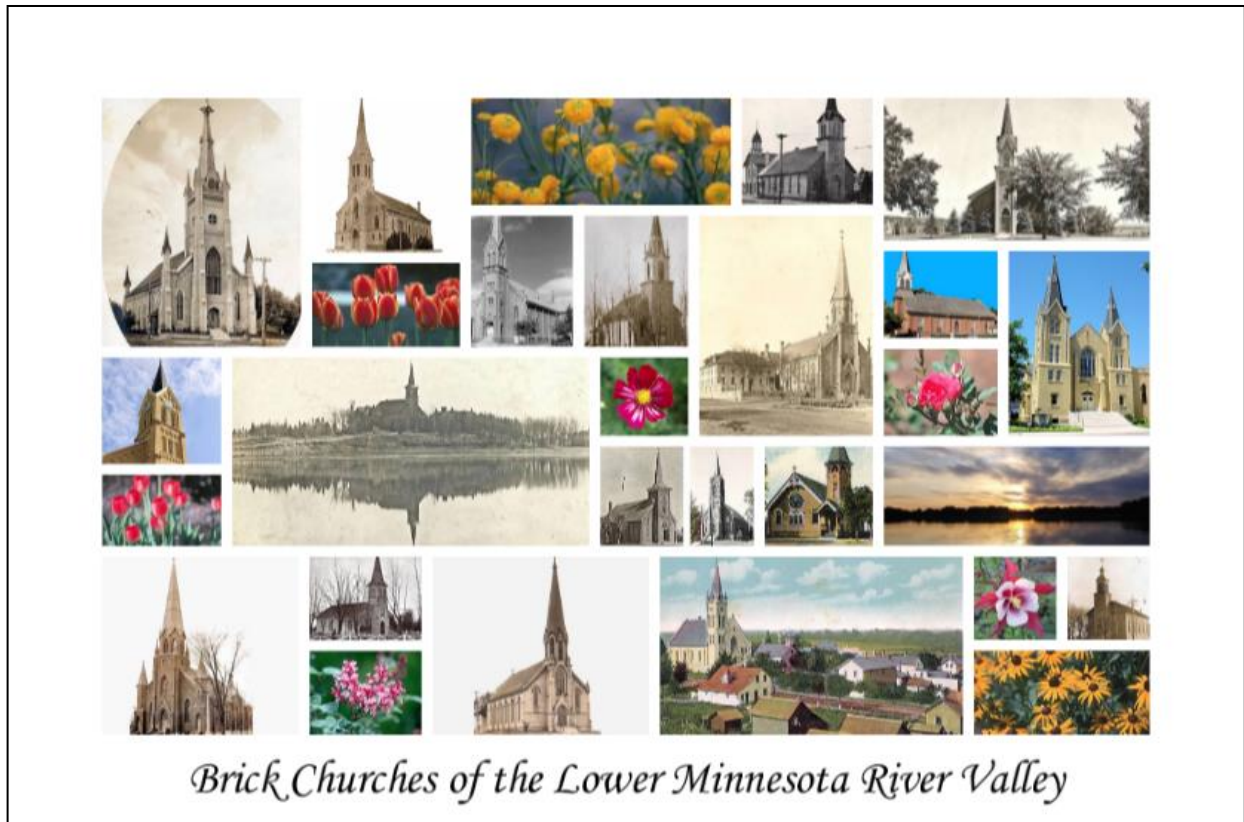
I have no information on this courthouse, other than this picture. I would assume it was built with Rochester brick, but I haven't found that information yet. I think the architecture of this period was beautiful.

3. For Sale

I have acquired quite a bit of brick 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 the historic Minnesota River Valley churches. You can purchase it on the “shop” page of my website, www.mnbricks.com/shop

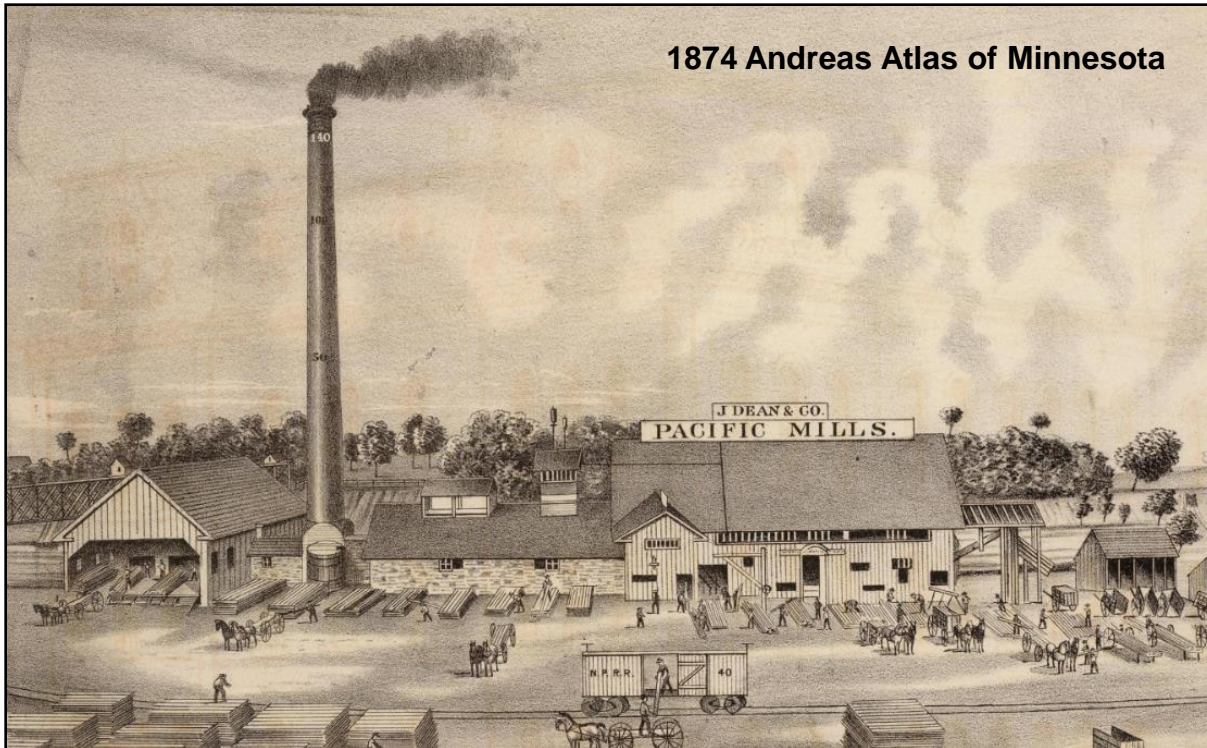
There are other posters for sale on my shop page as well.



4. A Look Back

The Pacific Mills, Minneapolis

Minnesota History Segment



The announcement by Messrs. Dean & Co. of their intention of offering the Pacific Mills at auction next month is not a matter of surprise to the people of this city, as it has been well understood for a long time that the company were preparing to close up their large business and dispose of their mill property. The company have been doing business here for seventeen years, and by square dealing have won a high standing in the commercial world, and, by the extent of their operations, have taken place among the leading lumber firms of the West. The property offered for sale is among the most desirable in the city of Minneapolis.

Located on the river, immediately above the end of the great Suspension Bridge, on the west side, with a river frontage of five hundred feet, and with the track of the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway running along its River Street front, it makes one of the most convenient sites for a saw mill, or other kind of manufacturing establishment requiring water and shipping facilities, and its proximity to the business center of the city gives it the advantage of any other location either in Minneapolis or the West. The booming capacity is about 1,500,000 feet. The Pacific Mills were built in 1866.

Continued on the next page...

1874 Andreas Atlas of Minnesota



The main mill is 70x80 feet on the ground, with an engine room 40x80 feet, and a planing mill 50x100 feet. The machinery consists of nine two-flue boilers, 20 feet by 40 inches each, and mounted in the most substantial sort of masonry, and supplied with three large pumps, the fuel (saw dust) is fed by patent feed works, which convey the dust from the saws to the furnaces. The engine (24 inches diameter and 30-inch stroke) is 150 horse-power, and drives two large circulars, a lath machine, two shingle machines, two patent edgers, one bolting machine, four trimmers and one wood saw. The large double steam gang of 38 saws is driven by two upright engines, with direct attachment, made by Weeks Bros., East Saginaw, Mich.

The Planing Mill has one large double flooring machine, one double surfacer, one siding machine and one splitting saw, with two of Sturtevant's blowers for conveying the shavings away from the mill into the river. **The smoke-stack is the finest in the West, being 14 feet in diameter at the base and 9 feet at the top, with a height of 162 feet**, which insures the finest draft for furnaces at all times. The mills are supplied with porous pipes connected with the city water works and the pumps of the mills, by which the entire building can be deluged with water in an incredibly short space of time. The working force of the mills is about seventy-five men, including planing mill men, teamsters and sorters, the force in the saw-mill alone being twenty-eight men. The average cutting capacity of the saw-mill is 10,000 feet per hour... (*Mississippi Valley Lumberman and Manufacturer*, Minneapolis, Friday, January 5, 1877, Page 4)

Continued on the next page...

This forenoon we made a call on the Pacific mills to see how they worked under the new proprietors, George A. Camp and T. B. Walker. We found it lively enough. In fact altogether too lively for a novice about big saw mills. There is such a whirl of saws, logs, slabs, cant-hooks, &c., that the average soul feels like beating a lively retreat as the only safe way of prolonging his residence here below. As is well known the present owners of the mills entered into possession last February. They have since made considerable improvements, thoroughly overhauling and readjusting all the machinery.

The main engine, driving all the machinery except the gang, has a power of 200 horse. The gang is run by two upright engines with direct attachment. The gang is double, carrying four medium sized logs or two large ones. It will saw 75,000 feet per day. The boards come from this gang as fast as fourteen men can carry away and load them. A patent trimmer is an improvement that Camp & Walker have put in, thereby rendering the capacity of the mill about the same as heretofore. One double circular saw is working and one lying idle, for the reason that the gang cuts the lumber more economically than the circular saws.

The mill will only be run in daytime, cutting this season about 12,000,000 feet, or about 85,000 to 90,000 feet per day. The shingle and lath machinery have not yet been adjusted to their new localities, but will be in a few days and then started up. There are altogether three engines in mills run by nine large double flue boilers. **The smoke stack contains several thousand more bricks than the Nicollet Hotel.** It is 150 feet high, rests upon the solid rock, and will stand for ages. It is over four feet in thickness and fully forty-eight feet in circumference at the base. It was put there to stay.

The planing mill is not running and probably will not as the proprietors design removing it to their yard across Fifth street above the Pacific depot. It will be put in motion there. A side track will be built into the new yard. The means of extinguishing fire is complete. The roof overhead is interlaced with perforated pipe that can flood the place in a twinkle. Gas is used when light is required at night. Everything is there that should be found in a big mill, and the managers are the proprietors themselves. They employ some sixty men in the mills and on the yard. (*The Minneapolis Tribune*, Thursday, June 28, 1877, Page 4)

T. B. WALKER.	. CAMP.
CAMP & WALKER,	
MANUFACTURERS AND WHOLESALE DEALERS IN	
GANG SAWED	
LUMBER,	
Shingles, Lath and Pickets.	
OFFICE at the PACIFIC MILLS, near Suspension Bridge,	
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.	

5. News Nuggets

A lady, on Jackson street, yesterday, met with a very severe fall, and was considerably hurt, by striking her toe against a nail sticking up in the sidewalk. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, St. Paul, Minnesota, Friday, June 26, 1863, Page 8)

La Crosse. A steamer called the "Cutter," which was built by Capt. Davidson for the trade above St. Anthony's Falls, arrived at this port last night. It was an extraordinary undertaking to bring a boat of her size over the Falls, but the skill and experience of Capt. Davidson was equal to the emergency, and she was brought over safe and sound. She was carried bodily on rollers, with all her machinery on board, from above St. Anthony to a point below the Falls, where she was launched. We believe this is the first time a steamer has thus been transported on rollers overland. Her tonnage is nearly that of the Wenona, while her draught is much less. She is a complete craft, and will make time between this city and St. Paul, even at the present low stage of water. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, August 14, 1863, Page 8)

Mankato. A drove of sheep which filled our streets for a quarter of a mile in length, and said to contain 2,160, passed through our town on Wednesday evening last. We learn that they were brought from Ohio and Michigan, and were going to Fort Snelling, to be distributed through the upper country. Attention is being turned to wool growing in this State, to which it is peculiarly adapted. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, September 11, 1863, Page 8)

An accident occurred last week while the passengers were being removed from the Northern Belle to the Cutter[,] a little below Prescott [Wisconsin], which resulted in the death of a fine boy, a son of one of the lady passengers on board, who was going on a visit to some friends in Minneapolis. It appears that the lady and her son both fell off the gang plank while passing from one vessel to another. The lady was saved but the boy was drowned. His body has not been found when the Cutter left. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, September 25, 1863, Page 8)

The *Dubuque Herald* of Wednesday says: "A large raft of lumber containing 1,000,000 feet passed down the river Monday evening for St. Louis, where lumber is worth \$45. The raft came from Stillwater, Minnesota, from Schulenberg, Boekler & Co's mills, and was piloted down by John Parker, who knows every inch of the river from Stillwater to St. Louis, and has few equals in his line. He brought the raft down without any trouble, notwithstanding the low stage of the river, starting twenty days ago. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, October 9, 1863, Page 8)

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**News Nuggets
from the late 1800s**

A team in which were three of Singer's sewing machines and a show case, which Mr. Johnson the agent, had on exhibition, met with an accident Friday last in coming from the Fort [Snelling], the breech-strap broke and the horse backed to the edge of the bluff, the hind wheels of the wagon going over, and the machines and show case sliding out and over the bluff. Fortunately there was no other injury done, although it was quite an escape for both driver and team. The loss will be, perhaps, in the vicinity of \$300, as all the machines were totally destroyed. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, October 9, 1863, Page 8)

We were presented yesterday by Bishop Grace with a specimen of apples grown in the garden of the [St. Paul] Cathedral from a tree brought from France by the late Bishop Cretin. They are a splendidly flavored fruit, and the perfection to which they have been brought proves conclusively that with proper care as fine an apple can be raised in this State as in any other in the Union. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, October 9, 1863, Page 8)

Departure of the Ninth Regiment. Of the 8th five companies of the Ninth Regiment, under the command of Col. Alexander Wilkin, left on the Chippewa Falls for St. Louis. The detachment comprises companies I, Captain Strait; A, Captain Chase; B, Capt. Strout; D. Capt. Skaro, and E, Capt. Dane. Captains Strait and Chase being on the sick list, could not accompany their regiment, consequently the command of their respective companies devolved upon the first lieutenants of each company. This regiment is second to none, in personal appearance, of those regiments which have already left the State for the seat of war, and will, we have no doubt, achieve fame as those which have preceded them. Their colonel is an old veteran, having already won for himself a deathless fame in the service of the Republic, both on the battle fields of Mexico and the blood-stained soil of Virginia, and will, no doubt, lead his men where glory is to be won. The scene on the levee baffles description. The parting of wife from husband – of sister from brother – of child from parent – was a scene which once witnessed could never be forgotten, and it required a considerable exercise of stoicism, on the part even of strangers, to repress the "unbidden tear." A sad, sad parting it was, to see those fine, stalwart men parting from all they held dearest on earth, in obedience to the stern call of duty, and to think how few of them would ever again greet the dear ones they loved so well. After a considerable time spent on the levee, the troops were marched on board, the steamer parted from her moorings, and with cheer after cheer and many a heartfelt prayer for health and happiness, she departed with her living freight[,] another sacrifice to the bloody Moloch [god] of rebellion. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, October 16, 1863, Page 8)

Col. [William] Crooks [the first train engine in Minnesota is named after him], of the 7th, commanding the frontier district from Sauk Centre to the Iowa line, has established posts on the whole line, a distance of about 160 miles, at twelve miles apart, and causes the whole line to be patrolled twice a day by infantry or cavalry. In addition, he has organized a force of scouts who keep up a thorough watch at the more exposed points. As a result of this apparently effectual guard against Indian raids, the frontier settlers are returning to their homes and their usual avocation. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, November 13, 1863, Page 8)

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At a request from our police office, the commanding officer at Fort Snelling on Sunday caused a search to be instituted within the Fort which resulted in the finding of about \$500 worth of clothing, all supposed to be stolen. The parties suspected to be the thieves, and in whose possession most of the goods were found, were placed under arrest, and will be turned over to the police authorities. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, November 13, 1863, Page 8)

Three deserters, handcuffed and under guard, were taken up to the Fort Tuesday morning. A looker-on thought it was a shame to see soldiers handcuffed. Does not the shame lie with the crime? No true soldier will regret to see men degraded who commit the crime of desertion – that crime which has delayed the triumph of our arms, and sent so many brave men, worthy of the blue uniform, to their graves on undecided battle-fields where absenteeism was one great cause of our non-success. The deserter disgraces the blue uniform, but the handcuffs adorn him fittingly. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, November 20, 1863, Page 8)

Thursday night, about 9 o'clock, Thomas Dougherty and Patrick Clune were walking to this city from the ferry at Fort Snelling, and were in a hollow near the Vance Brown house, when three soldiers on horseback came riding up behind them at great speed. Dougherty, a young man, uttered a cry of warning to his companion, and sprang out of the road, but Clune, an old man, not quick of hearing and slow of movement, was too late, and the foremost rider came down upon him at full speed, throwing him to the ground with great violence literally riding him down. The shout of the foremost rider warned his companions, so that the second jumped his horse over Clune's prostrate body, and the third was able to pull his horse at the spot. Dougherty and the soldiers hastily undertook to raise the old man to his feet, but found him insensible, and evidently dangerously injured, though there were no outward marks except light bruises to show that he had been hurt. The poor old man was afterwards able to mutter a few scarcely intelligible words for his friends, and died in less than an hour. An examination showed that his head must have struck the ground with great force, the concussion of the brain causing paralysis and death. His remains were brought to this city the same night, and yesterday taken to his relations in Scott county. The deceased was about 65 years old, a resident of Spring Lake township, in Scott county, and had been at work on the Cedar Valley Railroad, had drawn his pay at Mendota, and was coming to this city to work during the winter. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, November 27, 1863, Page 8)

The receipts of the season have not been large, and our packers are forced to decline orders for delivering early in December. Considerable pork will be packed here this season for the army. The lack of a good supply of packing hogs [barrels] alone prevents a large business being done this fall and winter. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, November 27, 1863, Page 8)

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Thanksgiving at the Fort [Snelling]. The invitation of Rev. Edward E. Eggleston to contribute for a dinner to the soldiers was quite liberally responded to by some of our citizens on Wednesday, in the shape of delicacies for the sick and luxuries for the convalescents. Gov. Swift tendered \$25 from the Sanford fund, (donated by Minister Sanford from Belgium, for Minnesota soldiers), which was accepted and used in the purchase of oysters and crackers for the convalescents. Mr. Eggleston also took up a magazine for each convalescent, which were eagerly received. Mrs. T. B. Yorks, of Stillwater, sent \$5 to be given to the most needy soldier. The convalescent in camp to whom it was tendered was in doubt whether himself or another, then absent, was most needy. It was left at his disposal. Mr. Eggleston found about 1,500 men at the fort, including sick, convalescent, and the Mounted Rangers and new cavalry. The sick in hospital had been provided with turkeys and other luxuries from the hospital fund, but the convalescents were sadly in need of a variety in the way of food, and if the donors could have seen how they enjoyed the good things sent them, the sight would have tempted them to repeat it. The eatables were distributed soon after Mr. Eggleston's arrival, to the cooks of the several masses of convalescents, under the direction of the officer commanding the detachment, and at noon they all had a good dinner before them, and could laugh at the regular rations in good earnest. At 2 o'clock Mr. Eggleston preached in the mess room of Co. K, 6th regiment, to a full and attentive audience. The sanitary stores left over were deposited in good hands, who will see them distributed to the soldiers. One of the surgeon's "worst cases" in [the] hospital, after his Thanksgiving dinner, being asked by a friend how he felt, replied that he had eat[en] enough to entitle him to a discharge from the hospital, and he thought he'd be with the convalescents in a day or two – from which we guess the hospital fund gave the boys in there a fair show at turkeys and "fixins." (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, December 4, 1863, Page 8)

With very favorable weather for work the contractor and subcontractors on the Cedar Valley road and pushing ahead vigorously. The grading is nearly completed from Mendota to Northfield, a considerable force is now employed between Northfield and Faribault, and other forces are in for the winter at the heavy rock work near Fort Snelling. The stone piers for the bridge at the mouth of the Minnesota are built above the water mark, and the sixty foot cutting through the sand rock below the Fort is market out by a deep wide road way. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, Friday, December 11, 1863, Page 8)

6. Brick Structure of the Month



**ACO Silo
Grand Forks, ND**





Well, I can't say I didn't see this coming. The historic Grand Forks ACO barns and silo have been wiped off the face of the earth. In addition, all trees, shrubs, house, and outbuildings have all been torn down and hauled off to the landfill. Quite a waste, but others would say progress.

Some of these trees were over 100 years old, like the stump pictured above. It is hard to get a perspective on this tree, but it was over 10 feet around, a huge old tree. I have seen that a lot in Grand Forks in recent years. Housing developments slowly encroach on old farmsteads with 100 year old trees. Then all the old, large trees get cut down to make way to building new homes.