

Exploring Historical Brickmaking in Minnesota

Minnesota Bricks

September 2020

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Chaska Brick

Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



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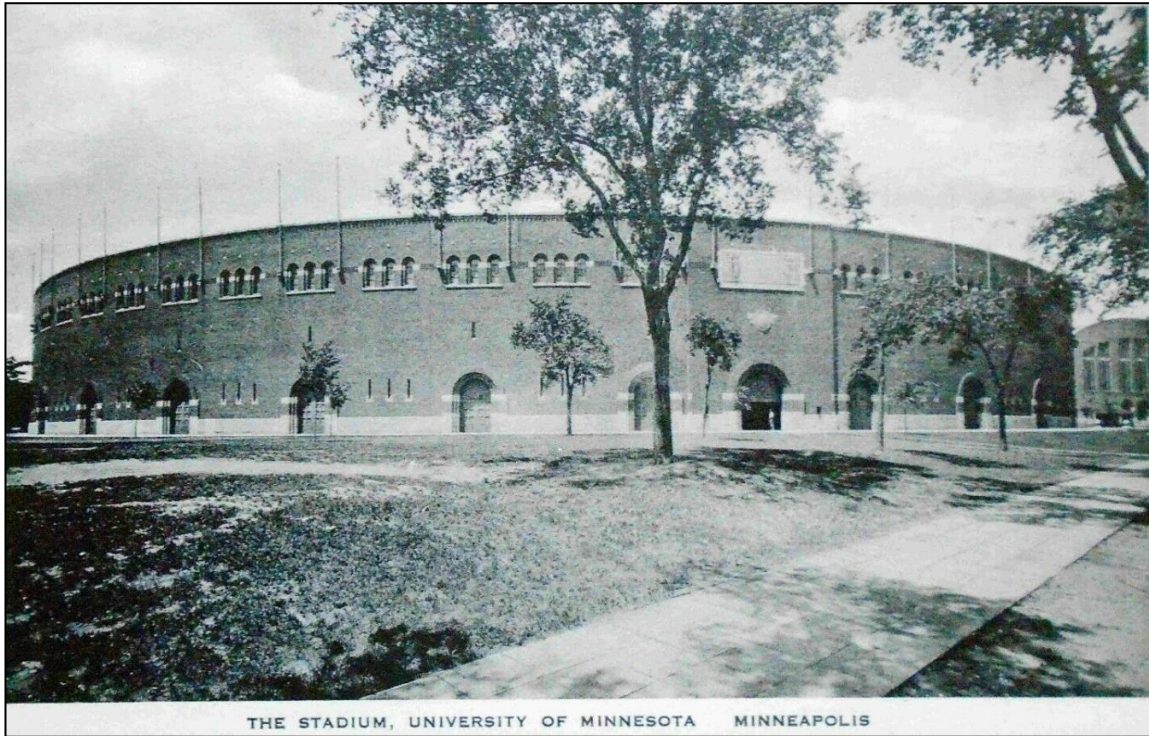
The back of this postcard says “hauling turkeys, Fergus Falls, Minnesota.” Can you imagine what a job this must have been? I hope these turkeys were being loaded into a big room full of ice inside the fancy brick building in the background!

1. What's New?

- I finished part 4 of my new 5-part video series on the Chaska, Minnesota, brickyards. This one is almost 30 minutes in length, but if you love history, it goes by quickly! You can find this video at: <https://www.mnbricks.com/mn-historical-videos>
- I was featured in the Chaska Herald this month. The paper did a story on my 5-part Chaska video series. I am always hoping to get exposure on what I do, because the feedback I get from people helps drive my passion for Minnesota bricks.
- 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. If you like what you see, tell a friend about it. I am always looking for more readers!



2. Photo of the Month



This is a postcard of “The [old] Stadium” on the University of Minnesota campus in Minneapolis. It is hard to tell, but the stadium was built out of brick. The stadium was used from 1924 to 1981. TCF Bank Stadium replaced this brick stadium.

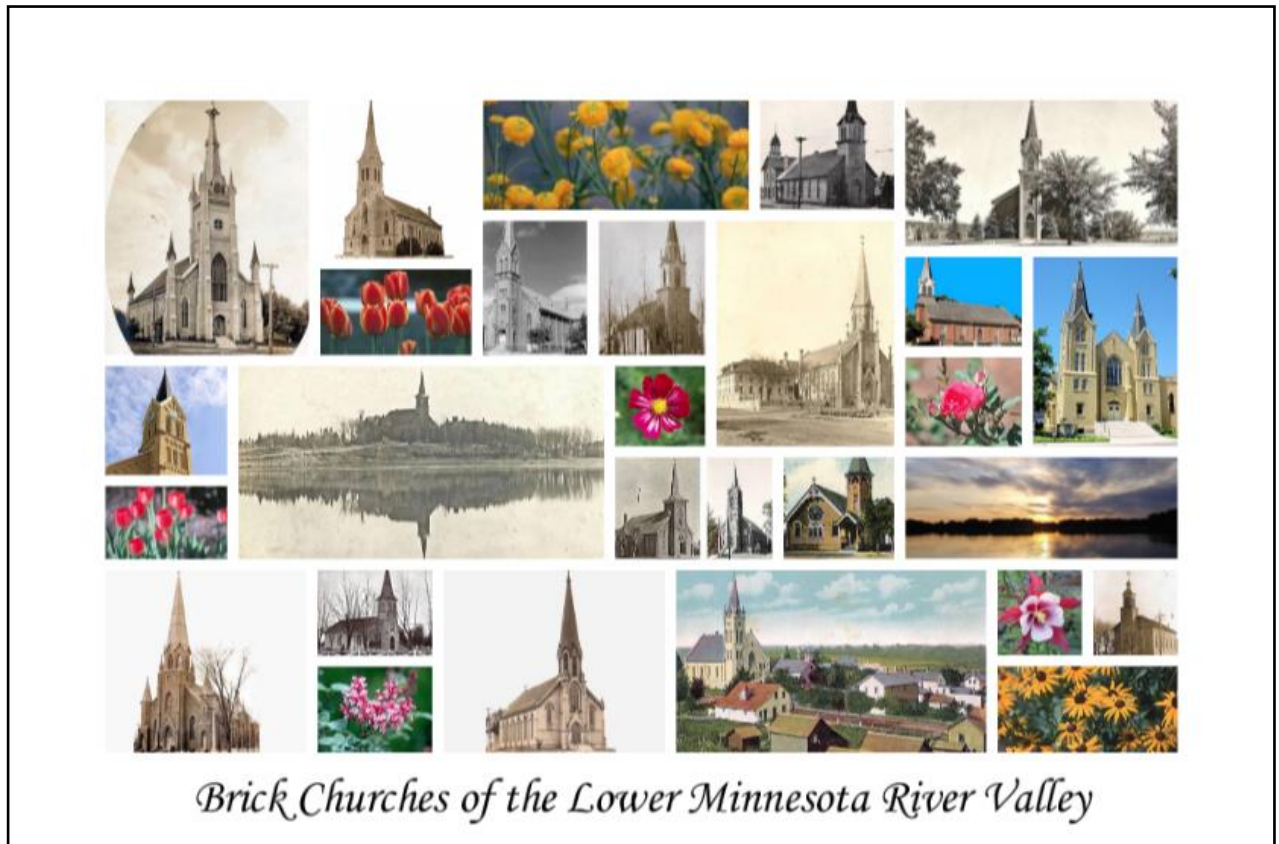
3. For Sale

There are still many brick-related remnants left from the old days.

Shown below is a 20 x 30 inch collage poster of the historic Minnesota River Valley churches. 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, Iowa and Minnesota silos, and the Minnesota Winter of 1880-81.



4. A Look Back

The Civil War – Minnesota Soldiers

Minnesota History Segment



In my research, I came across this poem, written by a Minnesota soldier in the Civil War.

My Minnesota Home by Alfred Bachelor.

Minnesota Minnesota!
And friends I left to roam
I was so foolish as to leave you
And my Minnesota home.

Now I regret the Step I've taken
Which causes me to mourn,
And wish myself back again
In my Minnesota home.

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What I think of most is
My mother left in tears,
Mourning for her boys
That may be gone for years.

Now I am Sick among Strangers
Sympathy they have none;
Which causes me to wish I was
In my Minnesota home

Where my mother could nurse me
And cure me up so soon
That I'd scarcely know I had been sick
In my Minnesota home.

It is no use complaining
For I cannot get away
To join my happy friends at home
Until Uncle Sam says yea.

The war can't last forever
Then so happy I will be
To have a chance to go back
To Minnesota.

Now my friends to tell the truth,
None dare my word dispute
The treatment that a private gets
Is no better than a brute.

The Officers in command
They play the perfect hog,
They pretend to think a private
Is no better than a dog.

I felt when I enlisted
Like fighting for my country,
But to be made a dog of
Will never do for me.

I trust the time will come soon
When we shall cease to roam,
And join the group at the fireside
In our Minnesota home.

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Now I will end my rhyming
And bid you all adieu,
Trusting that we'll meet soon
And make a happy crew.

And when this doth happen
I think I'll cease to roam,
And stick by my Mother
And my old happy home.

Lebanon [Kentucky] Hospital, Jan. 26, 1862. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, March 19, 1862, Page 1)

Here are a couple more Civil war stories...

Death of Capt. Foot of Second Regiment. By the subjoined letter from Judge Foot, of Ontario county, New York, it will be seen that Captain Foot, late of Company I, Second Minnesota Regiment, is dead. He was not in good health when the regiment left Fort Snelling, and was compelled to resign soon after the battle of Mill Springs [Kentucky], not being able to endure the hardships of the campaign. He was fortunately able to reach the home of his parents, in New York, to receive from them the consolation denied so many brave men who expire in the camp by the wayside, and on the battle field the letter of his father is noble and patriotic:

Geneva, Ontario Co., N. Y., March 15th, 1862. His Excellency, Alex. Ramsey- Sir: It is my painful duty to announce to you the death of my son, John Foot, late Captain of Company I in Second Regiment of Minnesota Volunteers. This deeply afflicting event occurred on the 13th instant. My son reached home on the 1st inst. in extreme ill health, caused by the exposure and fatigue of the winter's campaign in Kentucky, and the battle of Mill Spring. It is consolatory to me that his life has been of some service to our country. He was able to do his part with the brave regiment, of which he was a member, at the battle of Mill Spring, where the lines of the rebels were first broken and real success first initiated for the suppression of this most wicked rebellion. Had the life of my son been spared, his good education[,] high qualifications for his profession, sound moral principle and gentlemanly manners, would have made him an ornament to the Bar and State of Minnesota. But God's will be done. It seems ordered that this dear son's life must be my contribution for the maintaining of our government and institutions. If the result sweeps the dreadful institution of Slavery from our country, no sacrifice can hardly be counted as too dear. Respectfully, your ob't serv't. Samuel A. Foot. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, March 26, 1862, Page 2)

On Sunday afternoon a portion of the soldiers of the Fifth Regiment, from Goodhue and Wabashaw counties, it is said, found a dead mouse in their soup, and becoming thereby indignant at the Purveyor, took the dishes from the table and carried them out doors, demolished the table and other appurtenances to the room; and wound up by being locked up in the guard house. Pioneer. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, March 26, 1862, Page 1)

5. Brick Structure of the Month



Van Buren School St. Paul, Minnesota



This is a postcard of the Van Buren School in St. Paul, Minnesota. The school was built in 1881 on Dayton's Bluff of Chaska brick. The original building had eight rooms and cost \$20,000 to build. Other additions to the school were added later. I think the dormers (the windows built into the roof) were a fancy architectural element that really stand out.

6. News Nuggets

News Nuggets

One of the grandest sights, as well as one of the most interesting events of the season, was the appearance in our river, one day last week, of a Federal gunboat of the latest improvement. The river, swollen by the melted snow on its upper tributaries, and by the recent rain was expanded to its utmost capacity. The wind was blowing a hurricane, lashing the elements into a perfect fury. Amid it all came the boat, boldly breasting the storm, proudly dashing back the waves as they struck against the prow, and majestically pursuing her course down the river. A crowd collected on the levee to witness the striking scene. We did not learn her name, or the name of the Commander. She had two port holes, but we did not learn the character of her armament. It was intensely interesting to watch her progress. On she came, and when immediately opposite the Metropolitan she boldly rounded too, and the crowd evidently supposed was about to open her batteries on them, for they scattered in dreadful confusion. Their fears were groundless, for she passed harmlessly by. What she was up here for we don't know; and we hope we have not violated the army regulation in giving this account of her. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, April 30, 1862, Page 3)

To-morrow is the first day of May, and in pursuance of a time honored custom, must be appropriately celebrated. At ten o'clock all the children, old and young, married and single, of all the Sunday Schools are to meet at the lecture room of the M. E. Church, being careful in all cases to bring along plenty of things good for the stomach. From thence they will proceed to the University Bluff, where arrangements will undoubtedly be made for lots of fun. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, April 30, 1862, Page 3)

Sunday, the first rafts of logs this season, came down the river. A gentleman who left Stillwater last Saturday informed us that thirteen large rafts of logs had just been towed through the St. Croix lake, and would be down soon. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, May 7, 1862, Page 3)

There never was within the recollection of any inhabitant of Minnesota, such an abundance of strawberries as there was this year. They grew in every nook and corner, in every field, on every hill and bluff, and in every valley in the State. They grew large and sweet, and all a person had to do was to pick and eat. Surely this is literally a land flowing with milk and honey, and abounding in strawberries, blackberries, raspberries and all the other good things that are to be had in any other land can be got here. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, July 9, 1862, Page 3)

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We are again compelled to record another evidence of the fatal consequences of careless driving in our city. Little Louis Johnson had been out all day picking berries, and had sold them with the express purpose of buying fire crackers to celebrate the coming Fourth. Poor fellow, he little thought that he would be deprived of the enjoyment of his day's labor. Death must put a stop to all his earthly plans. We hope he is now in the enjoyment of greater blessings in another world. On returning home he jumped upon a wagon going in the direction of his home. When within a short distance from home a team came up behind and attempted to pass, which of course, caused a race. In their running Louis was either thrown from the wagon or jumped off, and was run over by the rear team, crushing his skull and killing him instantly. The verdict of the Coroner's jury was that Louis came to his death by recklessness on the part of the drivers. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, June 25, 1862, Page 3)

Rev. Mr. Bowdish says that, as he was coming home from the County Line last week, he saw, about a mile above Benj. Bevers' farm, six telegraph poles that had been struck by lightning. Some of them were split and shattered, and others only knocked down. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, July 30, 1862, Page 3)

As we expected, immediately on the expiration of the restriction of the Game Law, the sportsmen began to slay the chickens. They shoot them down by hundreds every day, and yet there seems to be no diminution in their numbers. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, August 6, 1862, Page 3)

Ira A. Lynch Esq., late of Indiana, has removed to this place, and is about to commence the business of making pumps. He enlisted in the 10th Indiana regiment under the first call for 75,000 men, and with the whole regiment re-enlisted for three years or during the war. He was in the battle of Rich Mountains, Virginia; Mill Springs, Kentucky; Fort Donelson and Pittsburg Landing, in Tennessee. At Mill Spring he was shot through the left arm, near the middle thread or cord. At Fort Donelson he escaped unhurt, though he was in the fight, and under fire from Thursday until the surrender of the fort on Sunday. At Pittsburg Landing he was shot through the interior of the arm, between the elbow and the shoulder, and under the short rib on the left side, the ball still remaining in him. At the last mentioned battle he received five other slight wounds – two by musket balls in the left hip and thigh, passing through but breaking no bones, nor cutting any cords. One musket ball on the inside of the right leg just above the knee – one by a piece of shell on the right leg, two or three inches above the ankle joint, cutting a large piece of flesh, but not injuring any bones, and also one by a musket ball grazing his head, just above the right ear, cutting a furrow through the hair as it went. This is what we call a close call, and Mr. Lynch is one whom we should say had been through the war. After receiving the treatment stated above, he was discharged, as he well might be. But instead of being sick of the army, his only desire is to get back to the old 10th Indiana, but he fears he will not be able to pass the examining physician. Mr. Lynch pays a high compliment to the Minnesota Second at Mill Spring. He says it came into the fight to the rescue of the Indiana 10th gallantly, and behaved well while in. (*The Goodhue Volunteer*, Red Wing, Minnesota, August 6, 1862, Page 3)

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Yesterday we made a short visit to Col. D. A. Robertson's farm and nursery garden, two miles west of the city, on the Summit avenue road, for the purpose of looking at the improvements made and making by the proprietor. The drouth [drought] of the past season has seriously interfered with the work, but, considering that the nursery was only commenced last spring, great success has been achieved. A large variety of ornamental trees and shrubbery adapted to our climate, besides many on trial, have been set out. An orchard of standard fruit trees, six hundred in number, has been set out, selections of the hardiest kind of apples, pears, cherries and plums. We also noticed numerous kinds of grape vines, embracing all the new kinds found successful in northern climates. We were particularly interested by the extensive arrangements for propagating under glass, including a large green house, just being finished, intended to give room to 7,000 or 8,000 potted plants. Under glass, in the several propagating beds, we saw a stock of flowers large enough to supply the State, we should think, embracing all the popular varieties. The establishment is under the charge of Mr. Henry Frank, a highly intelligent gentleman, of thorough skill and long experience in his profession of florist and nurseryman. We observed, also, that besides making this a fruit and ornamental nursery, the proprietor has been devoting considerable attention to vegetable gardening, and has had cultivated, during the present season some twenty different best kinds of potatoes, the seed for which were obtained from Canada, the Eastern and Western States, with a view to furnishing for general introduction throughout the State more varieties. (*The Weekly Pioneer and Democrat*, St. Paul, Minnesota, October 21, 1864, Page 8)

During the last two weeks we have noticed some twenty teams in town from Sioux Falls, Dakota Territory, a distance from here of over a hundred miles. These teams bring in wheat and return with lumber and merchandise. We see teams here daily, loaded with wheat from several of the northwestern counties of Iowa. (*The Windom Reporter*, September 7, 1871, Page 1)

When coming from St. James on Friday morning last, we observed a herd of at least fifty elk, very near the railroad track. The shrill scream of the locomotive frightened them terribly, and they all crowded together as though to protect each other from an approaching foe. The train having passed them, they leisurely pursued a westerly course. (*The Windom Reporter*, September 14, 1871, Page 1)

Our enterprising Postmaster, Mr. Sam'l Espey, has prepared a case with 150 boxes for the use of people who get their mail at the Windom P. O. He will soon have some lock boxes in readiness. We don't believe any town in the State has a neater case of post office boxes, or more conveniently arranged. (*The Windom Reporter*, September 28, 1871, Page 1)

The people of Lake Shetek have the most extensive church in the west. They hold their meetings in a beautiful grove; have preaching every Sunday and a Sunday school which numbers from seventy to eighty scholars. They are soon to have a fine church which will make it more pleasant in serving the Lord, especially in stormy weather. (*The Windom Reporter*, October 5, 1871, Page 1)