

Exploring Historical Brickmaking in Minnesota

Minnesota Bricks

October 2020

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www.mnbricks.com

Chaska Brick

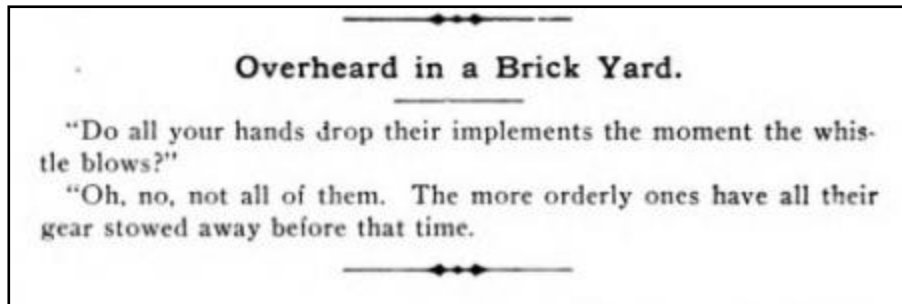
Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



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This is a joke that appeared in a brick magazine in the early 1900s.

1. What's New?

- I am in the finishing stages of part 5 of my 5 part video series on the brickyard history of Chaska, Minnesota. I expect to have it finished in the next week. This will finally complete a nearly 10-year project that started my interest in Minnesota bricks. These videos can be found at: www.mnbricks.com/mn-historical-videos
- I heard from a reader in Los Angeles, California, who had an old deck of cards from the New Ulm brickyard. It is always fun to see advertising pieces from the old days!
- 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



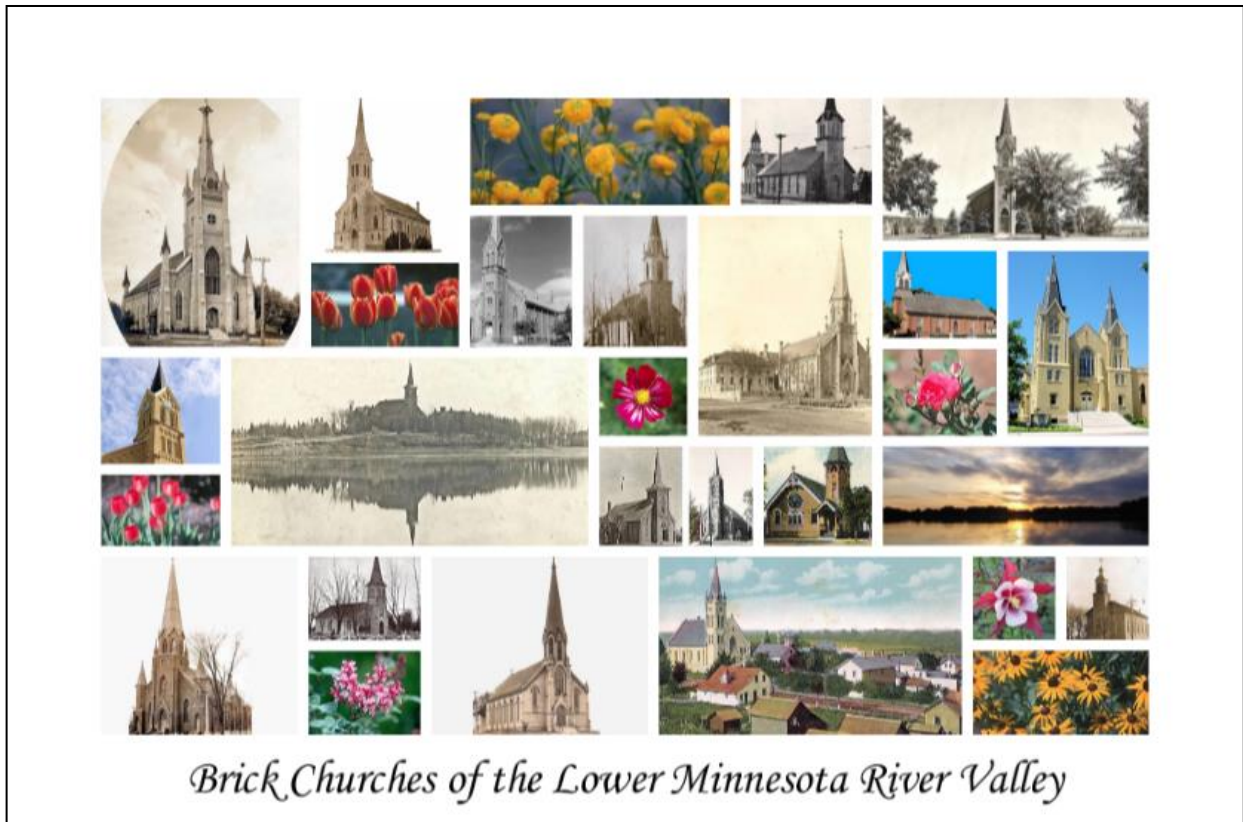
I have no information on this postcard, other than it was taken in Minnesota. My impressions were that the wagon was really large and the people appear to be dressed up. Maybe they were heading to a church outing?

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 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

Brick Manufacturing Conventions

Minnesota History Segment

THE SOUVENIR BADGE.

As the reader may see from the accompanying cut, the badge given to the delegates and those accompanying them, by the Cincinnati brickmakers, was a very unique and handsome souvenir of the second Cincinnati Convention. It was executed in metal with a lustrous copper finish which produced a rich color effect. The names of the various points at which conventions have been held were given on the badge and afforded a pleasant reminder of the happy times spent at the various places. What a flood of pleasant memories come to one as this little gift is contemplated, can only be appreciated by the old time members who have participated in a majority of the annual gatherings. Those who were so unfortunate as to miss the recent Convention can have one of these souvenirs as a slight compensation for their disappointment. Those desiring it are requested to notify the Secretary at once. It is hoped that those who have not yet renewed their membership will take this as a gentle hint that their attention to that detail is desired. A new and complete Pocket List of Members will be issued as soon as the roster is revised. A copy of the Pocket List will be sent to each member. It will prove a great convenience to those who wish to visit or communicate with any of the members from time to time.

1904	
CINCINNATI	
'03 BOSTON	'02 CLEVELAND
'01 OLD POINT	'00 DETROIT
'99 COLUMBUS	'98 PITTSBURG
'97 BUFFALO	'95 ATLANTA
'95 CLEVELAND	'94 CHICAGO
'93 LOUISVILLE	'92 WASHINGTON
'91 INDIANAPOLIS	'89 PHILADELPHIA
'88 MEMPHIS	'87 CHICAGO
1886	
CINCINNATI	

Continued on the next page...

The brick manufacturers of Minnesota usually attended national conventions during the off season. At these meetings, they had the chance to discuss all aspects of their business with fellow manufacturers from all over the country. They were also shown the latest and greatest manufacturing equipment. The article on the previous page shows a special badge that was available to the attendees of a 1904 convection. The picture below was the same badge that I found advertised for sale.



5. News Nuggets

Our village during the past week has been more than usually stirring. Since the snow, wheat, wood and all kinds of produce have been pouring in like a torrent; many times the streets were almost blockaded by teams; the grist mill has been perfectly besieged. (*The Shakopee Argus*, January 28, 1865, Page 3)

Shakopee is again in the market with the highest bounty for volunteers [for the Civil War]. This town will pay from \$250 to \$300 to each recruit credited to the town, and all those desiring to secure the largest bounty should volunteer at once. We pay in Green Backs, and give men their choice of service. (*The Shakopee Argus*, January 28, 1865, Page 2)

Profanity is becoming quite an accomplishment now-a-days, especially among the juvenile portion of our community; we – hardened sinner though we may be – are almost daily shocked by the wicked oaths uttered by boys scarcely old enough to articulate their own names. (*The Shakopee Argus*, February 4, 1865, Page 3)

We neglected in our last issue to notice the handsome haul of fish made not far from this place in a little creek where the fish had run up from the river and congregated in a small spring hole. We understand that nine wagon loads were taken out by hay forks; all a man had to do was to drive his wagon up close to the 'hole' and fork them from the water into his wagon box, and in a few moments of industrious labor he would have all his team could draw, of a variety of choice fish – principally pickerel – varying in weight from three to twenty pounds. (*The Shakopee Argus*, February 11, 1865, Page 3)

The ever hospitable and kind-hearted people of Shakopee raised by private subscription in the past two days nearly Two Hundred Dollars for the purpose of buying vegetables to be forwarded immediately to Company 'I,' Ninth Regiment, who are in sad need of something outside the rough army fare, and they are so situated as to be wholly unable to obtain anything in the way of vegetables. Again we exclaim, good for our folks! (*The Shakopee Argus*, February 11, 1865, Page 3)

We learn by a returned trapper from the vicinity of Big Stone Lake, that in all that region there is now four feet of good, solid snow. This being the case we may look out for a heavy freshet [flood] in the spring, and a good season of navigation. Our low water towns, Chaska, Carver and Henderson, will please take notice and govern themselves accordingly. (*The Shakopee Argus*, March 4, 1865, Page 3)

Continued on the next page...

**News Nuggets
from the late 1800s**

We wish the bristly-backed vermin-skinned, rotten-hearted, loathsome, dirty, filthy, cowardly sneak, who borrowed a barrel of choice family flour from our back kitchen a few nights since, much joy, and will guarantee to him and his another barrel just as good, if he will favor us with another visit, "free gratis for nothing." We respect a thief, but not that class who would purloin the cents from a dead man's eyes, the linen from a sacrament table, that would exhume a corpse for the ring it wore, or enter the habitations of helpless women and children whose husbands and fathers are absent battling for their country and pilfer their only frock and last palatable morsel. This is the class of brutes in human shape that have been infesting this community more or less for the past two years, and are likely to in the future for all the present authorities will do to the contrary. (*The Shakopee Argus*, February 18, 1865, Page 3)

The work upon the new church [St. Mark's], in Shakopee, which is to be the most splendid edifice in the Valley, is now fairly commenced. The location is to be near the old one, or perhaps a little south of it, one of the very best building sites in the village. It is to be built of brick on the gothic style, and will cost as estimated, from twelve to fifteen thousand dollars. Its dimensions are as follows: Length 135 feet; breadth 60 feet; height of steeple 135 feet; height of main aisle 50. We understand nearly five thousand dollars have already been subscribed. We have no fears that those who have the management of [the] building in charge will realize any difficulty in raising the required funds for its early completion, as every one who has any interest in their own town, will contribute liberally towards building a house which would add so much to its looks. (*The Shakopee Argus*, May 13, 1865, Page 3)

The citizens of this town are becoming enraged beyond endurance at the reckless barehanded daylight and midnight stealing carried on here of late. Nothing is safe for a moment out of one sight. Farmers from the country have their produce taken from their wagons and carried off by the bushel, in the streets, wood piles vanish by the cord, boxes of goods left upon the levee are gobbled instanter, and yet the no one makes an effort to bring these most detestable of all earths wretches, to justice. (*The Shakopee Argus*, May 13, 1865, Page 3)

We learn that the English speaking Catholics of this town have organized themselves into a congregation by themselves into a congregation separate and apart from the Germans, and are about to commence the building of a church for themselves [St. Mary's]. They have purchased three lots one block from the Court House – directly east – and will begin work upon the building at once. The building is to be 40 by 70 feet with a vestry room addition in the rear and is to be built of brick, and it is estimated will cost from five to seven thousand dollars. A large proportion of this amount has already been subscribed and we have no doubt but that they will meet with success in the undertaking. (*The Shakopee Argus*, June 10, 1865, Page 3)

The small institution, apologetically called a newspaper, the *Herald*, published at Chaska, Carver County, Minn., should not copy original articles from this or any other paper without giving credit for the same, as that is considered by all honest men to be the worst kind of stealing. (*The Shakopee Argus*, July 1, 1865, Page 3)

Continued on the next page...

Mr. P. [Rev. Pond] was absent preaching a funeral sermon, and had, in company with the other members of his family, left home about noon, leaving in charge of the house a lad of some sixteen, whom he had through charity taken in some three weeks before. Upon returning home after divine service the boy was missing, and the house in some disorder; among other things, they at once discovered a trunk broken open and the contents strewn about promiscuously, as also one of the bureau drawers. This at once excited suspicion and upon examination they found that all the money in the house was gone, amounting to over six hundred dollars. Mr. P. immediately came into the village and notified our citizens, when a squad of some ten or fifteen started in pursuit. The boy, as was afterwards found, had taken the money and started for the woods back of town, but owing to his foot being so sore (which, according to his diary, was crushed between two [railroad] cars near Chicago) he found he could not reach them in time; he then retraced his steps and went to the river, took a boat and paddled downstream. He had been seen when going in the direction of the river by a man who was plowing in a field, and by him the pursuers were put upon his track. Three or four of the party were sent down on this side, while others crossed and went down on the other side. Those on this side came to the river about three miles below town, when all but one secreted themselves to await his approach; shortly he made his appearance and was soon within speaking distance of the party when he was hailed by one of the party, and asked if he would not set him across the river in his boat. The boy hesitated, but finally came to the shore, when he was arrested, the money recovered, and he was lodged in jail. He said he knew nothing of those who had committed the other depredations, and thought he "might as well try the experiment on their credit" – and it is generally thought that he told the truth in regard to having any knowledge of the other thieves. According to his diary, which was found on his person, his name is William Robinson, aged sixteen, and is from Dumbarton, New Hampshire; which place he left early in April last, and has worked his way along through the States, sometimes traveling on foot, sometimes by railroad and again by private conveyance. He confesses to have been guilty of small thefts on the way, and says he is an orphan his parents having died when he was five years old, at which age he was taken by the Shakers and raised. His object in coming so far west was that he thought he "could do better." He is a rather fine looking boy, with dark hair and eyes and possessing a considerable degree of intelligence; and we hope he may bear his punishment with patience whatever it may be, and resolve to change the life he seems to have adopted to one of honor and usefulness, which he is naturally fitted for: according to his little book, his adventures and hardships on the journey were numerous and trying. He will be retained until the next term of court, when he will have his trial and receive his sentence. (*The Shakopee Argus*, July 15, 1865, Page 3)

Hon. L. R. Hawkins, brought into town last week, some cherries of different kinds, superior to anything of the kind to be found in the Valley. Mr. Hawkins is still ahead in the fruit business, and deserves the price; he is bound to raise fruit of a superior quality, notwithstanding the hail and wind storms that have visited us this season. He informs us that had it not been for the untimely and entirely unusual frost that visited our State this season, he would have had near fifty barrels of apples this fall besides much other fruit of different varieties. This illustrates the falsity of the doctrine here advocated so often viz: That fruit cannot be raised in Minnesota. Trees of all kinds, warranted, can be had of Mr. H., at his place in Spring Lake, this county, and he says in the fall is a good time to set them out. (*The Shakopee Argus*, July 22, 1865, Page 3)

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The Shakopee band of banditti [robbers] have now commenced stealing the bells off the cows, and also milking them; several bells have been stolen within the past few nights in and about town. (*The Shakopee Argus*, July 29, 1865, Page 3)

There will be services held at the German Catholic Church to-morrow, (Sunday), appropriate to the laying of the corner stone of their new church edifice. The ceremonies will be very imposing, and such as will be worth one's while to witness. Refreshments will also be served. (*The Shakopee Argus*, August 5, 1865, Page 3)

The Fair held on Monday last was quite well attended, considering that it is the busy season, and considerable stock changed hands, and a large amount of bad whiskey was disposed of. We have resided in Shakopee nearly four years, and we never saw before, put them all together, as many drunken men in town as there was last Monday. (*The Shakopee Argus*, August 12, 1865, Page 3)

The series of religious services, both in English and German that have been had every day during last week at the German Catholic church concluded on last Saturday evening, that being the end of "Mission Week." A dinner and supper was served at the church on Saturday, the proceeds of which amounted to near \$300.00; this with the subscriptions already taken, will amount to about \$6000.00, which will be expended on the new church building that is in course of construction, and which, when finished, will cost no less than twenty-five thousand dollars, and will be the largest and most handsomely finished structure in the State. (*The Shakopee Argus*, August 12, 1865, Page 3)

A lively contest is going on in town as to where the Railroad depot shall be located. (*The Shakopee Argus*, September 2, 1865, Page 4)

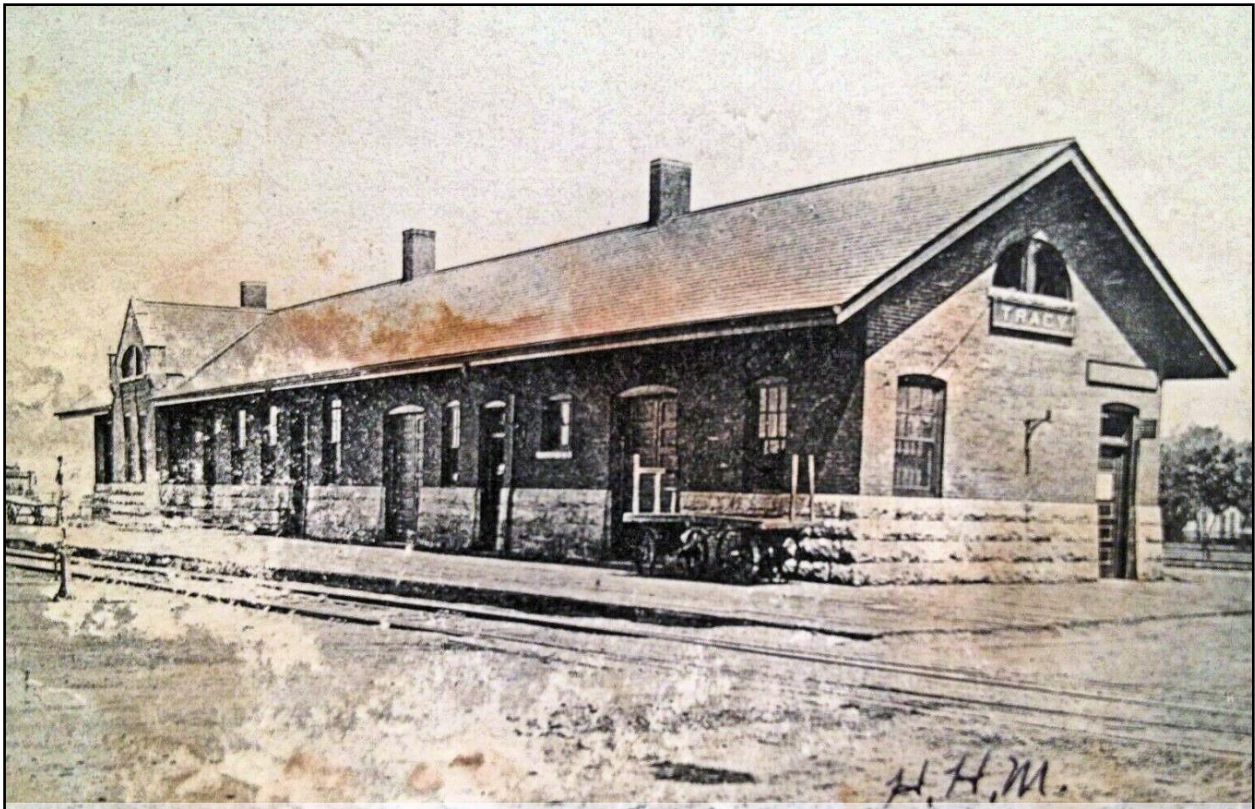
Chicken hunting is now going on "right smart" among the citizens of our town; not only chickens, but ducks, snipe, partridge and other game abound, and scores of them are killed with but little trouble. (*The Shakopee Argus*, September 12, 1865, Page 4)

We were the other day enticed by others to go "grape hunting." We went and as a reward got much grapes, many unnatural apertures [holes] in our panties, sore hands, braised limbs, braised shins and many other relishables to numerous to make mention of. Unfortunate for us we were appointed on the committee that was to do the climbing; this was not our forte, but for fear the females would think us a coward we put on a bold front, and just "went" for all the grape vines in the premises. We found to even our surprise that we were "some" on the ascent and still more on the descent. Our agility was soon discovered by the party below, and we were cheered vociferously, which gave us nerve and courage and caused us to perform many airy feats, (which must have been good or the company below wouldn't have laughed and cheered so) including our aerial suspension that knocked Holland & Maddens into a cocked hat; for their feat was performed on a short pole near the earth, while ours was from the end of a grapevine which had broken and swung us away from the trunk and left us dangling to our waist in the top or a wicked thorn tree below us, from which we only escaped by strategy. This was nearly the closing scene of our operations among the tree-tops, and we returned home with many grapes, elderberries, etc... (*The Shakopee Argus*, September 12, 1865, Page 4)

6. Brick Structure of the Month



**Depot
Tracy, MN**



I love old brick depots, with their fancy architecture. This is the Tracy, Minnesota depot. I don't have much information about it, other than I know Ochs Brick (from Springfield, Minnesota), were used in its construction. I wish I had a better quality postcard to show its fancy details.