

Exploring Historical Brickmaking in Minnesota

Minnesota Bricks

August 2021

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Chaska Brick

Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



www.chaskabrick.com

Contents

1. What's New?	3
2. Photo of the Month	4
3. Biography	5
4. Old Advertisements	8
5. A Look Back	9
6. News Nuggets	11
7. Brick Structure of the Month	14



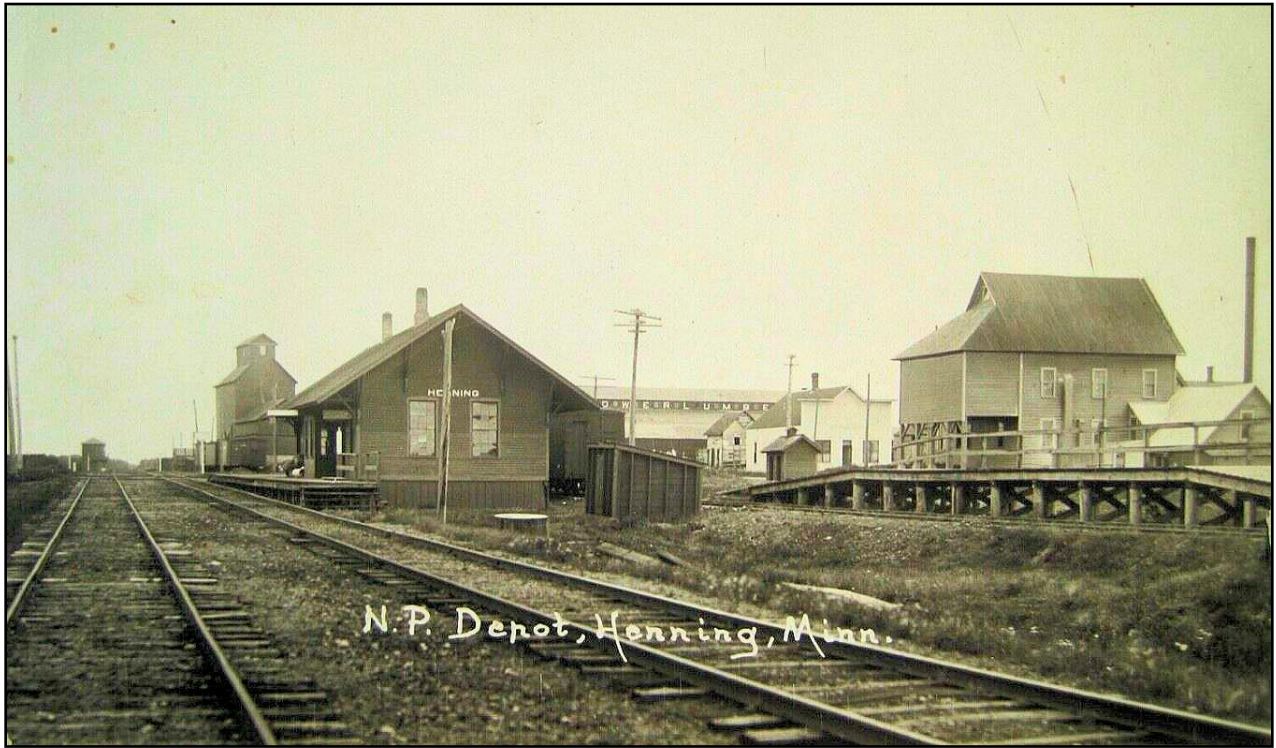
This old postcard says "The New & The Old N. P. R. R., Lake Park, MN."

1. What's New?

- After doing some digging, I found out that the Bowlus, MN, brickyard also made stamped bricks. I have never seen one personally, but I assume they are rare (one is shown below, from the Morrison County Historical Society).
- Make sure to check out my historical videos, which can be found at: www.mnbricks.com/mn-historical-videos
- I received an email from a reader in Florida, whose last name was Bowlus. He was looking to obtain a "Bowlus" stamped brick for his family. As I have never seen one, I could only refer him to the local historical society.
- 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!
- I heard from a reader in St. Cloud, MN, who has a circular brick room in his basement. He believes it was a cistern for water, which is very possible. If you have any other ideas, feel free to email me.
- 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

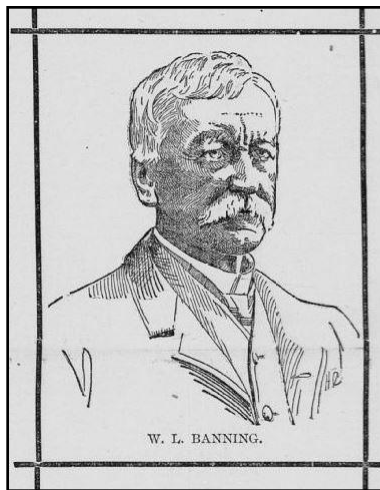


This postcard says "Northern Pacific Depot, Henning, Minn."

The railroad was the life blood of towns back in the day. Therefore the depot was one of the most important buildings in town. It is too bad more of these fancy buildings were not saved. Many of the original wooden buildings burned down, but the second and third generation buildings were generally made of brick.

3. Biography

William L. Banning Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad St. Paul, Minnesota



Page 1. Hon. William L. Banning died at 4 p. m. yesterday at his residence, 75 Wilkin street. About a month ago Mr. Banning was afflicted by a stroke of paralysis from which he never recovered. When his illness occurred his daughters, Mrs. Frederick Ayer, of Lowell, Mass., Mrs. Joseph Banning, of Los Angeles, Cal., and his son Frederick, of Charleston, S. C., were summoned to his bedside, but his improvement was such that, while far from restored, he was regarded in no immediate danger, and Mrs. Ayers and Frederick returned to their homes a few days since, only to be informed last night that the end had come. Mr. Banning was born in the state of Delaware seventy-seven years ago. In early life he removed to Philadelphia, where he studied law and was admitted to the bar. His ability was early recognized, and in 1845 he was sent to the Pennsylvania legislature. The booming times which preceded the crash of '57 attracted him to the West, and 1855 found him a resident of St. Paul. His first business here was in banking, and his banking office was in the Irvine block at the Seven corners. When the financial crash of '57 came and the effort was made to relieve the pressure by passing the famous five-million loan bill, a measure proposing to loan the railroad companies the credit of the state to the extent of \$5,000,000, he was one of the few to see the mistake which was being made. He fought the measure bitterly but unavailingly. He was not a man to be swayed by others, but, once forming his opinion as to what was right, nothing could swerve him from what he regarded as his duty. Though his fight against the five-million loan bill was made almost single-handed he lived to see the sentiment that he was right become absolutely unanimous when the final day of reckoning came, and the debt was paid after having once been repudiated. The winter of 1861 he served in the legislature, retiring from his banking business the same year.

Continued on the next page...

After two years' service in the army as commissary, he began his great life work, which was the construction of a railroad from St. Paul to Duluth. The great idea which he was constantly urging was the rail connection between the Great lakes and the great river, and as illustrating that point he incorporated the company as the Lake Superior & Mississippi railroad. No terminal points were named, and it was not until years after the completion of the road and his retirement therefrom that it was styled [renamed] the St. Paul & Duluth. It was through his efforts that a bonus of \$250,000 was received from the city, and it was through his efforts that a land grant was secured at Washington and the money raised for the construction of the road. He was for many years the president of that road, and since his retirement from that position, some ten or twelve years ago, he has not been in active business. He had large property interests in Duluth, the advance upon which gave him a fair competency for life. Strange as it may now appear, he met with bitter opposition from some of the citizens of St. Paul in his efforts to build a road to the lake. This opposition was actuated by counter business interests, but to a man less able and persistent than Mr. Banning it would have proven fatal. Though he had been an ardent Republican, in 1872 he was a supporter of Horace Greeley, and headed the Democratic ticket as a candidate for governor. His wife, who survives him, was Miss Mary Sweeny, a sister of R. O. Sweeny, for many years a druggist in St. Paul, but now state fish commissioner, residing at Duluth. Mrs. Stewart, widow of the late Dr. J. H. Stewart, is Mrs. Banning's sister, while Mrs. H. J. Horn, wife of the well-known attorney, is Capt. Banning's sister. The children who survive him are

Page 4. Mrs. Frederick Ayer, of Lowell, Mass.; Mrs. Joseph Banning, of Los Angeles, Cal.; Miss May Banning and W. L. Banning Jr., of St. Paul, and Frederick D. Banning, of Charleston, S. C. (*St. Paul Daily Globe*, November 27, 1893)

Capt. Banning aimed to work a revolution in the Northwest, and partially succeeded. It was his idea that Duluth and not Chicago should be the objective point of the railroads of the Northwest, and to this end he worked and talked in an earnest and convincing style. There was no stauncher friend of Duluth, no greater believer in her ultimate destiny of becoming the greatest city in the West, and no one who could better explain her natural advantages and her commanding position in relation to the Northwest. Capt. Banning has departed, but his work will ever remain. Duluth owes to Capt. Banning a debt that never will be repaid. (*Duluth Evening Herald*, November 28, 1893, Page 4)


Continued on the next page...

4. Old Advertisements

DULUTH BREWERY,
 WASHINGTON AVENUE, ABOVE NEWTON STREET.
 The undersigned continues to manufacture an article of
FIRST CLASS BEER,
 Out of pure barley-malt and hops an mountain brook water as the
 only ingredients
 Families supplied by the keg at their residences—price \$3 per
 keg.
 (3-ly) **NICHOLAS DECKER, Proprietor.**

LAKE SUPERIOR & MISSISSIPPI
Railroad Company.
CHEAP FARMS
In Minnesota.
 The Line of this Road is from
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
 The Head of Navigation on the Mississippi, to
Lake Superior,
 A distance of 150 miles.

**LAKE SUPERIOR & MISSISSIPPI RAIL-
 Road.**



New through route to all points East and South via DULUTH,
 opened August 1st, 1870.
 On and after Wednesday, Septem 18, and until further notice,
 trains will run as follows:

Going North

Leave St. Paul.....	8.30 A. M.
" White Bear Lake.....	9.10 "
" Centerville.....	9.27 "
" Forest Lake.....	9.54 "
" Wyoming.....	10.11 "
" North Branch.....	10.52 "
" Rush City.....	11.31 "
" Pine City.....	12.12 "
" Hinckley.....	*1.15 P. M.
" Kettle River.....	2.37 "
" Moose Lake.....	3.37 "
" N. P. R. R. Junction.....	4.05 "
" Thomson.....	5.00 "
" Fond du Lac.....	5.40 "
" Oneota.....	6.25 "
Arrive at Duluth.....	6.40 "

Going South

Leave Duluth.....	7.20 A. M.
" Oneota.....	7.36 "
" Fond du Lac.....	8.20 "
" Thomson.....	9.00 "
" N. P. R. R. Junction.....	9.10 "
" Moose Lake.....	10.31 "
" Kettle River.....	11.26 "
" Hinckley.....	*12.55 P. M.
" Pine City.....	1.33 "
" Rush City.....	2.13 "
" North Branch.....	2.54 "
" Wyoming.....	3.35 "
" Forest Lake.....	3.52 "
" Centerville.....	4.30 "
" White Bear Lake.....	4.37 "
Arrive at St. Paul.....	5.30 "

(Connecting with stages at White Bear Lake for Stillwater
 at Wyoming for Taylor's Falls, and at DULUTH with steamers
 for all Lake Ports, making a new and delightful route to points
 East and Southeast.
W. W. HUNGERFORD, Superintendent.
C. G. EDDY, Agent.
 *Dinner.

5. A Look Back

The First Train into Duluth, Minnesota

Minnesota History Segment



This is an early photograph of Duluth, MN.

At thirty five minutes past 11 o'clock p. m. of August 1st, 1870, the first through train on the Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad arrived at Duluth – having left St. Paul at seven o'clock and fifteen minutes the same morning. Late as was the hour crowds of the people of Duluth lined the track and surrounded the Depot on the Lake Shore, and bonfires blazed and human voices cheered as the locomotive that had in the morning drank of the waters of the Mississippi stood smoking, panting and thirsty on the shores of our inland sea and replenished its tank from its crystal waters alongside the track. The first train that came through was composed of Locomotive Engine No. 8; Baggage Car No. 3; Passenger Cars Nos. 1 and 4; and Freight Cars Nos. 1039 and 1046. The railroad officials on board were – Conductor, W. B. Reynolds; Engineer, John Perrine; Fireman, W. H. Blake; Brakemen, Henry Boyce, David Gannel and W. Woodman; Express Messenger, D. S. Childs; Mail Agent, J. Parker. Last, but not least, Engineer and Superintendent Wm. Wallace Hungerford, was on board.

It is but sheer injustice to say, that to his never-tiring energy and skilled supervision since he succeeded Engineer Dacosta on the first of January last, do we owe more than to any other hundred men, this early accomplishment of our wishes and our hopes. The last spike was driven and the tracks from Duluth-ward and St. Paul-ward joined, at eleven minutes past eight o'clock p. m., and at a point about three miles east of the Dalles bridge. As the last spike was driven home and the track proclaimed ready for the train to pass onward, the wildest cheers arose from the hundreds of laborers who, since Saturday morning last, had been working "double-tides" from early dawn, without cessation, until near midnight every night, to attain the accomplishment of a through connection on the First of August, 1870, as promised by Engineer Hungerford. The amount of determination and energy invested by him, by Contractors Graham and others; by trestle-builder Burbank; and to track-layer Brennan; and by the workmen and Railroad hands generally; has never been surpassed on the continent. Praise and honor to them all! The passengers who came through were but few. They consisted of J. S. Carroll, C. McCausland, A. P. Clark, of St. Paul, and J. D. Edmands of this city. It was expected that the President, and other officials, and some distinguished citizens, would have come to Duluth by this first train; but it seems they did not know Engineer Hungerford's reliability as a "timist," as well as we do at this end of the line; and did not, therefore conceive it possible, with all the work still to be done two or three days ago, for him to succeed in spanning the Portage between River and Lake by the first of August, as he proposed – and so, they missed the honor of being on the First Through Train to Duluth! The first train would have reached Duluth sooner than 11:35; but it was necessary to wait a considerable time after the tracks were connected, to clear the line of the construction trains; and it was prudent, besides, to move slowly on the first and trial trip, and that, too, in the night. The return train to St. Paul started out Tuesday morning at 6 ½ o'clock. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, August 6, 1870, Page 2)

Between eight and nine o'clock, on Tuesday evening, August 2d, the second day of the through opening of the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad, the first locomotive on the road, the *Wm. L. Banning*, came in with two cars attached, being a special train, bearing President Wm. L. Banning, wife and family; Chief Justice Chase and Miss Mary Chase, his daughter; Dr. J. H. Stewart wife and family, and Miss Emma and Miss Minnie Wheaton; Gen. Willis A. Gorman and wife; Robert O. Sweeney and wife; Henry M. Knox and wife; Lewis E. Fisher and wife (of the St. Paul Pioneer); Capt. R. E. Davis (of the Pioneer); Ex-Chief Justice Aaron Goodrich; Frederick Driscoll (of the St. Paul Press); H. F. Masterson (of Masterson & Simons); Joseph P. Hazard, of Newport, R. I.; Thomas Arnold, Gilbert Graham and Engineer Shields of the Dalles, and many others. The greetings and welcomings of this party were scarcely over, when the regular train arrived, bringing quite a number of passengers. The Clarke House in the evening witnessed some gay times – and an impromptu ball, was an incident that did not detach from the pleasantness of the occasion. On Wednesday, the St. Paul party and their guests, and a large number of our citizens accepted an invitation from the officers of the steamer Arctic, which arrived here Tuesday, with a crowd of excursionists from the lower lakes, to take a short voyage of an hour or two duration down the North Shore; by which every one was much gratified; with many thanks to the men of the Arctic for their considerate invitation. In the afternoon, the special train was made available by the St. Paul party, and our citizens, for an excursion visit to the Dalles of the St. Louis River, sometimes known as Thomson, without a "p." (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, August 6, 1870, Page 2)

6. News Nuggets

On Monday last old man Landry arrived from down the North Shore with a nice lot of lake fish, including lake trout, siskowit and white-fish – principally of the two first varieties. He had such a quantity that the main land Duluth fellows didn't want them all, and so generously sent him down to us hungry mortals on The Point! We bought a dozen quite large trout and siskowit, already cleaned, for \$1.50; about 35 pounds in all; at the rate of a little over four cents a pound! Here was richness at a cheap rate; and we have enjoyed it deliciously; though butterless and almost lardless... (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, May 15, 1869, Page 3)

The smoke from the fires of Starkey and his men clearing the Railroad track rises for miles up the valley of the St. Louis. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, May 22, 1869, Page 3)

We have had a keg of beer from the Duluth Brewery – being of the first brew of the new brewer. We will let him off this time, though the big lake yearns for him! If he does as badly again, we would recommend awarding him his “watery bier” in his own vat. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, May 29, 1869, Page 3)

The first mosquitoes of the season presented their little bills this week. Our Lake Superior mosquitoes are not as strong in the jaws as they are farther south, but they make up in the music what they lack in manducatory power. However, rather than give up a choice bite they will chew a good while, “singing as they toil.” (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, May 29, 1869, Page 3)

Radishes and hill onions have already graced our tables, and we are almost persuaded that even the frozen soil at the north pole will yield vegetable products. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, June 5, 1869, Page 3)

A team load of Shakopeans arrived here on Monday night last via St. Paul; including Henry Elliott, carpenter, H. E. McDaniels, carpenter, R. H. Armstrong, carpenter, George Edwards, Chas. Gillmore, Chas. Dean, teamster. They have all gone to work, and the team too, at big wages – except Edwards, who is ill. We hear of two team loads more of Shakopeans on the road bound this time to stick, invest and built. So far Shakopee has sent us a good kind of immigrants – live, working men. It is the kind we welcome. Thomas brown arrived by Wednesday night's stage. He is a stone mason. Good again. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, June 5, 1869, Page 3)

**News Nuggets
from the late 1800s**

Minnesota Point. The peculiar location of this beautiful strip of land – the refreshing breeze that prevails during the hottest weather reminding one of those which one finds so invigorating on the New England seaboard – to say nothing of their practical effect in driving away all mosquitoes and other insectiferous pests – is already attracting much attention throughout its whole extent. Several gentlemen of taste, who desire to get away from the crowded cities of the lower lakes, and of the lower Mississippi as well, are seriously entertaining the idea of building summer residences thereon. Two of these summer residences will probably be commenced next week, about a mile from the base of The Point, and others will no doubt soon follow, until “away down The Point” will be adopted as a fashionable and desirable locality to reside. It is the intention of the owners of the land adjoining the platted portion of “Lower Duluth” to extend a wide Avenue from the Town Boundary to the Light House Reservation, with a tier of 100 foot lots on the Bay and Lake side. This will make, when completed, a magnificent drive, rivaling, if not excelling the fashionable drives on the Lake Shore at Chicago. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, June 12, 1869, Page 3)

The first billiard table in Duluth arrived by the Norman, and was yesterday set up at Finkle & Farrell’s Hall, near the Bank on Superior St. It is a handsome one from the factory of J. M. Brunswick & Bro., Chicago. Already, the indications being so favorable, another table is in contemplation. Pretty well for a 30 day old town! (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, June 19, 1869, Page 3)

The whole of Duluth town-site, mainland and Point, is beginning to appear like one great wild strawberry patch. Already we have tasted some delicious berries; and in a short time the earth hereabouts will be red-mottled with them in every direction. The flowers, too, are beginning to be glorious – the columbine and wild rose being specially profuse and beautiful. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, June 26, 1869, Page 3)

James Starkey, the contractor for chopping and clearing the Railroad track on Mr. Branch’s job, has got back, we see, from St. Paul and Centreville. He tells us that he has about seven miles of the track cleared and grubbed, and expects to complete his work between here and Fond-du-lac in about two weeks. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, July 3, 1869, Page 3)

There are seven United States land offices in Minnesota, viz: one at Duluth, one at Taylor’s Falls, one at St. Cloud, one at Greenleaf, one at Alexandria, one at St. Peter and one at Winnebago City. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, July 3, 1869, Page 3)

The Bakery of H. Weber, adjoining our office, is now in full blast. It is a great convenience. Its bread is in good repute. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, July 3, 1869, Page 3)

We have repeatedly warned our readers of the necessity of great caution in setting fire to stumps, brush, &c., during a heavy wind or dry time. A few days since some twenty-five cords of wood were burnt on the Railroad track between here and Oneota; and on Thursday several cords of wood were destroyed and one time all the buildings on Superior Street were threatened with destruction. Continue to clear off the brush and pile it up vigorously; but burn it in separate piles, one at a time, and cautiously. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, July 3, 1869, Page 3)

Fisheries of Lake Superior. This branch of industry is attracting more attention this season than ever before. Mr. G. H. Mason and E. M. Shayer, experienced fishermen from Green Bay, have started extensive fisheries near the mouth of Brule River, twenty-five miles down the Lake on the South Shore. They are building their houses and have already in operation three "pound nets." They bring their barrels from below but are making arrangements for manufacturing their own barrels during the ensuing winter, so as to be prepared for a large business next season. Messrs. Mason & Shayer employ already a considerable number of men and have capital enough to carry on business on a large scale. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, July 10, 1869, Page 3)

One of Ingalls' teams came near getting a "ducking" on Thursday. They were being driven on the new dock when a steamer, which was lying there blew her whistle preparatory to leaving. This scared the horses and they commenced to back. The wagon went over, but the driver succeeded in saving the horses from a like fate. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, July 24, 1869, Page 3)

We have noticed frequently during the past week several of our promising young Duluthians engaged in the dangerous pastime of navigating the waters of our Bay on such floating pieces of board as they were able to pick up along the docks. While we commend the spirit that animates all here, both old and young, to paddle their own canoe, yet we would caution parents to insist that they adventurous boys embark on something less frail than building material, while exploring the coast – otherwise we will be called upon to record a first class item in our local columns. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, August 28, 1869, Page 3)

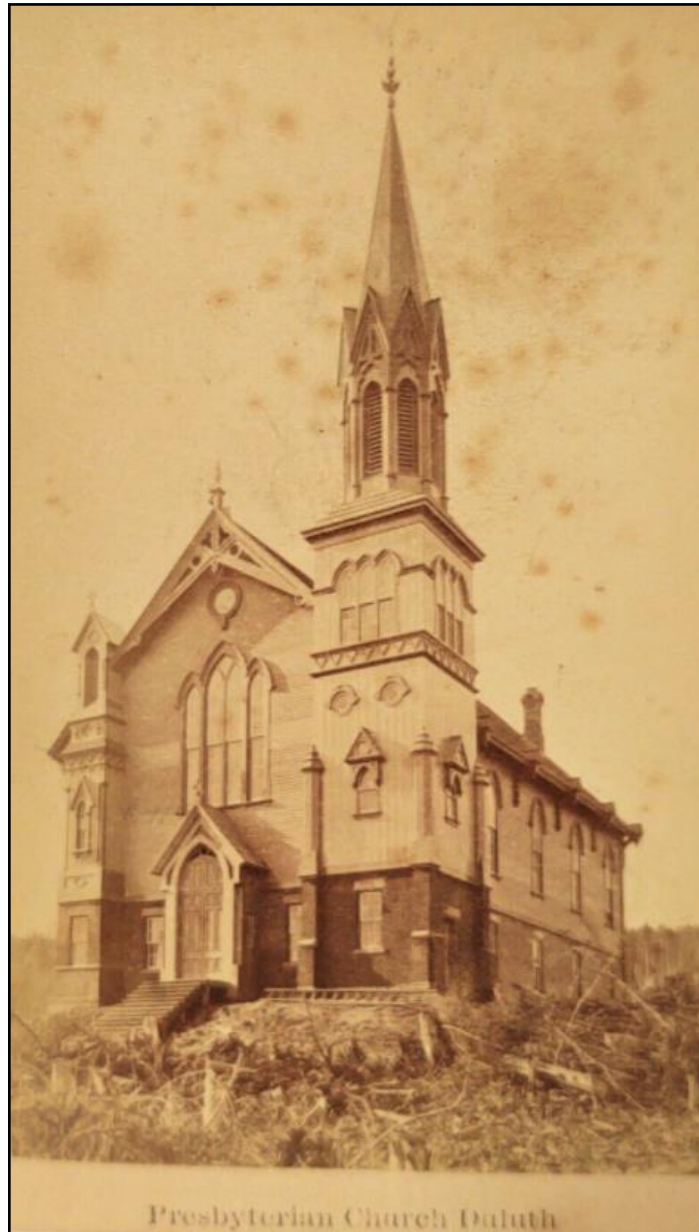
On Sunday and Monday last large flocks of wild pigeons, on their way south, passed over Duluth, and a number of our sportsmen bagged large quantities of the game. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, September 11, 1869, Page 3)

Accompanying the Philadelphia excursionists, in August last, was Mr. A. S. Thompson, of St. Paul, a photographer of considerable reputation, who visited this region for the express purpose of photographing the interesting scenery along the line of the Railroad. Camping out, and at considerable risk and trouble, Mr. Thompson and his business associate, Mr. C. P. McKenzie, succeeded in obtaining one hundred views, which are now before us. We have seen most of the famous scenery of the United States; but in romantic grandeur and picturesque scenery the representations referred to excel anything we have ever seen. The instantaneous views of the Dalles of the St. Louis River convey a most remarkable likeness of the remarkable scenery of that region. The turbulent water, dashing over the granite dams, with its circling eddies, broken waves, and shore froth, is most accurately delineated, and the observer almost fancies that he is looking upon the scene itself, in all its wildness. Another series of views represent scenes along the Little River, a tributary of the Saint Louis. Beautiful cascades, forest shadows in the rippling stream, moss-covered boulders and mountain verdure are all shown with fine effect. The village of Fond-du-lac, with its Indian huts, the crossing of the Railroad at the Dalles, the portage, the moccasined rock, Spirit Lake and island, and the lower falls, are portrayed very artistically. A good idea of our wonderful resources in the vast beds of slate and forests of timber can be obtained from an inspection of these pictures, and we advise all of our friends to call upon the artist at his office in the old Minnesotian building, on the Point, and take a look for themselves. We understand it is his intention to make negatives of all points of interest around Duluth, photographs of which will be disposed of with the views of St. Louis River. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, October 16, 1869, Page 3)

7. Brick Structure of the Month



Presbyterian Church Duluth, MN



The Presbyterian Church Building. The plans for this Church have been received by the Building Committee, and are the admiration of all who have seen them. A more chaste, beautiful and substantial structure could not have well been devised, and the architect, Mr. A. M. Radcliffe of St. Paul, has certainly done himself great credit in his work. The order of the architecture is approaching the Gothic. The building is 40x76, 40 feet high, and has buttresses at all the corners. The tower is 75 feet high, and is finished quite elaborately. The church rests

upon a basement, eleven feet high, is to be built of solid stone, and to be faced with Oneota brick. It was originally contemplated to build this facing of dressed stone, but owing to the difficulty of procuring the same in time, brick has been adopted instead. The basement will be divided into a vestibule, a committee and infant class rooms, each 23x15, and a lecture room 40x30. The main building will be built of wood. The church hall will be 53x40, with an orchestra 24x14. The building will be placed thirty feet back from Second Street, and will in time be enclosed with a neat iron railing. The contract for digging the foundation and building the masonry has been awarded to Mr. C. Barnes, who has already gone to work at the same. It is hoped to have this completed in a month. The basement will be at once finished off, and prepared for occupancy before winter. The main structure will be raised, boarded up and roofed in, so that work on the inside may be continued right along. Mr. R. C. Knox, an excellent master builder, has been appointed superintendent, and has instructions to see that all of the details are carried into thorough execution. We cannot but congratulate all interested in the prospect of building up a church that will not only be an ornament to the town, but a monument of liberality of its generous donors. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, September 18, 1869, Page 3)

The Presbyterian Church building is beginning to make quite a fine show in its progress towards completion. To Elder Marvin, who has acted chiefly as the Building Committee and to Mr. R. C. Knox, the Architect and Builder who has the Superintendence of the construction, much credit is due for the energy, in the face of many obstructions, with which the enterprise has been pushed on to its present condition of forwardness. The frame and rafters being all up – the main tower up to the level of the belfry octagon – the basement in a condition very nearly to completion – we may reasonably expect the promise of holding worship in the structure before January 1st 1870, will be realized. This Church when completed will be a fine land mark out at sea in the Lake. The tower will be eighty feet high, and its spire will be seen for twenty miles or more by those on boats approaching our port. (*The Duluth Minnesotian*, November 27, 1869, Page 3)

The church was demolished in 1971.