

Minnesota Bricks

December 2022

Minnesota Bricks

Exploring Historical Brickmaking & More in Minnesota

www.mnbricks.com

Chaska Brick

Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



www.chaskabrick.com



Contents

1. What's New?	3
2. Quarter 1 2022 Videos	4
3. Quarter 2 2022 Videos	5
4. Quarter 3 2022 Videos	6
5. Quarter 4 2022 Videos	8
6. Other	10

1. What's New?

23 YouTube Videos with 1.4 Million Views in 2022

- Starting in late 2021, I changed my focus from putting together a monthly newsletter to creating YouTube videos on a range of Minnesota historical topics that I thought would be interesting. In 2022, I produced 23 videos. These videos were viewed over 1.4 million times.
- I really enjoy producing the videos as they allow me to try to re-create, to the best of my ability, what it would have been like to be there at the time. They offer a great way to compare historical imagery to what the area looks like today. Creating a video is quite time intensive, so I found I was unable to do both a monthly newsletter and a YouTube video.
- It was great to do more travelling in 2022. I revisiting some of the areas I'd previously been and captured current video of some locations. My goal for 2022 was to publish a new video every two weeks. I was able to meet that goal, for the most part, but realize that in 2023 I may need to publish videos every three weeks due to the amount of research and production time needed to give some of the stories I'd like to share full justice.
- The YouTube videos I have produced can be found on my website at <https://www.mnbricks.com/mn-historical-videos/>, or on my Minnesota Bricks YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@MNBricks>. I appreciate your interest in my newsletter and hope you enjoy my YouTube videos as well. Feel free to contact me at mnbricks@gmail.com any time. I appreciate any ideas or suggestions you have for potential future videos as well as giving me feedback on what I've already produced.

2. Quarter 1 2022 Videos

February:

[In The Bluffs on the Winona & St. Peter Railroad:](#)

In 1868, Charles Zimmerman took a series of stereoscopic views, called "In the Bluffs on the Winona & St. Peter Railroad" near Winona, Minnesota. These are some of the earliest and most spectacular Minnesota railroad photographs in existence.

[Springfield, Minnesota:](#)

These postcards take you back to the old days of Springfield, Minnesota. Many of its original buildings were built with Ochs brick, manufactured in the local brickyard.

March:

[Mankato Railroad Crash of April 18, 1875:](#)

Two young boys derailed a St. Paul & Sioux City Railroad train north of Mankato, MN, on April 18, 1875. Luckily, only 1 person was injured.

[Minnesota Flour Mills:](#)

Wheat used to be king in Minnesota, and Minneapolis was the flour capital of the world. Many smaller towns also had flour mills, with their own logos and specialty brands. This video contains a sampling of the smaller towns and their mills.

[Passenger Pigeons in Minnesota:](#)

Most people don't remember anything about passenger pigeons, except that they traveled in huge numbers. This is the story about passenger pigeons in the State of Minnesota.

[Governor Ramsey's 1851 Trip to Pembina:](#)

After negotiating with the Sioux tribes of southern Minnesota, Governor Alexander Ramsey made a trip to Pembina in 1851, to negotiate with the Chippewa tribes. The journey from St. Paul to Pembina was documented by J. W. Bond, and is a fascinating story.

[Northern Pacific Railroad Disaster - The Brainerd Bridge Collapse of July 27, 1875:](#)

The Northern Pacific Railroad was a transcontinental line, built from the Great Lakes to the West Coast. On July 27, 1875, its Mississippi River bridge collapsed at Brainerd, Minnesota, causing a huge disaster for the new railroad.

3. Quarter 2 2022 Videos

April:

[The Devastating Fergus Falls Tornado of June 22, 1919:](#)

An F5 tornado hit Fergus Falls, Minnesota, on June 22, 1919. It caused extensive damage in town and it also hit the Oriental Limited, a special Great Northern Railroad passenger train. This video takes you through that eventful day.

[Triple Railroad Bridge Wrecks at Rochester, Minnesota, in 1866](#)

The Winona & St. Peter Railroad experienced three major bridge wrecks at the crossing of the South Fork of the Zumbro River at Rochester, Minnesota. This video explores the details surrounding these events, including a spring flood, a record summer flood, and a significant worker accident.

[Minneapolis History Trivia - How much do you know?](#)

The Minneapolis Tribune contained many local interest stories with trivia around 1870. This video shows a sampling of those stories.

June:

[The Historic Gehl-Mittelsted Brick Farmhouse - Part 1:](#)

A historic Carver brick farmhouse built in 1888 is endangered. It has become part of the Minnesota River Valley wildlife refuge, so it is considered in the flood plain. Learn more about the history of this house and farmstead, and view evidence of a clay block silo. There's even a brick outhouse!

4. Quarter 3 2022 Videos

July:

[The Historic Gehl-Mittelsted Brick Farmhouse - Part 2:](#)

This historic Carver brick farmhouse, built in 1888, will not be around much longer. It has fallen into major disrepair, and is slated to be demolished. View how the farm's house and outhouse have changed from 2009 to 2022.

[The fatal head-on railroad crash near Chaska, Minnesota in 1904:](#)

Two Minneapolis & St. Louis steam locomotives were not aware of each other as they approached the outskirts of Chaska, Minnesota, from opposite directions on the evening of June 28th, 1904. A heavy downpour made the visibility extremely poor. The results were disastrous, with the locomotives crashing head on. View the train's routes while hearing about the sequence of events leading to the crash. Included are historical images of Carver and Chaska as well as the railroad crash scene.

[Searching for ACO Silos in Minnesota:](#)

Historic ACO farm silos are still relatively common across southwest Minnesota, but many have lost their attached barns over the years. Most of these silos were built from 1910-1940, from burnt-orange clay silo block manufactured at the Ochs brickyard at Springfield, Minnesota. Ride along as I search the back roads of Minnesota for ACO silos.

August:

[Sweet Roots of Minnesota -- The St. Louis Park Sugar Beet Factory:](#)

The first home-grown sugar in Minnesota was produced at the St. Louis Park sugar beet plant. Planning for this historic processing facility began in 1897, with the plant opening in the fall of 1898. Learn how sugar beets were grown, harvested, and processed those first few seasons, and the hurdles the farmers and company had to overcome.

September:

[The Lost Renner Farm - A Once Beautiful Minnesota Family Farm that is Vanishing with Time:](#)

Only crumbling remains are left of the once thriving Carl and Lydia Renner family farm from the early 1920's. Multiple buildings, including the farmhouse, barn, silo, and other

outbuildings were constructed of burnt-orange brick and block from the A. C. Ochs Brick & Tile Company of Springfield, Minnesota. View the original farmstead layout, and take a walk through what's still there in 2022.

5. Quarter 4 2022 Videos

October:

[The Abandoned Phillips Farmhouse – A Historic Stone and Brick Combination Home:](#)

Phillip and Ann Phillips were part of a Welsh Settlement in Le Sueur County, Minnesota, which was established in the 1860s and 1870s. They raised 12 children on their family farm. All that remains today is the abandoned farmhouse, a fabulous stone and brick structure.

[Hastings and Dakota Railroad - Only Remnants Left Today:](#)

The Hastings and Dakota Railroad has not survived the test of time. The original track lost its usefulness years ago, and was removed as the suburbs of the Twin Cities grew. Bits and pieces are still visible if you look closely. See the remnants of wooden trestle bridges, the route it traveled through Dakota, Scott and Carver counties in Minnesota, and examine the different depots along the route.

November:

[Crookston's Palace Hotel – Majestic Landmark to Parking Lot:](#)

The City of Crookston, Minnesota, is located in the Red River Valley of the North. The birth of the city in 1872 from the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad is featured, along with some of its early businesses. The growth of the city is an excellent example of how railroads took over for steamboats as the primary transportation for US fur trade and commercial goods, and the resultant competition between railroads for domination of the industry. The construction of its famous Palace Hotel began in 1891. Sadly, after falling into disrepair, the hotel was torn down in 2010. See views of Crookston and the hotel through the years, and demolition video.

[Railroad Brawl near Crookston Minnesota - The Northern Pacific vs. the Great Northern:](#)

The St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railroad (predecessor to the Great Northern) had a monopoly at Crookston, Minnesota from 1872 to 1889. When the Northern Pacific built a branch line to Fertile Minnesota, several Crookston residents formed the Duluth, Crookston & Northern Railroad, to build a link to the Northern Pacific line at Fertile. They even provided a \$50,000 bonus. However, the Manitoba Railroad was not happy that the Northern Pacific needed to cross its railroad line. This led to a 7-day showdown between the two railroads in October and November 1889, which involved fights, rail cars, and the court system.

December:

[Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad Remnants - Carver to Merriam Junction Minnesota:](#)

In the Minnesota River Valley between Carver and Merriam Junction in the 1860's, Henry H. Spencer hoped a town and a railroad would become his lasting legacies. But it wasn't meant to be. Eventually, the Minneapolis and St. Louis railroad built through the area in 1871, bringing steady rail traffic with it. Over the years, the traffic dwindled. When a trestle broke in 2007, the segment was abandoned. The Minnesota River bridge between Carver and Merriam Junction was removed in 2011, along with all of the railroad iron. However, many structural elements can still be found along this path in 2022. Enjoy a fall hike, exploring the abandoned Minneapolis & St. Louis Railroad route between Carver and Merriam Junction.

[Minnehaha Falls - A Minnesota Gem:](#)

There are many scenic spots along the Mississippi River between St. Paul and Minneapolis, but the most popular is Minnehaha Falls. The earliest non-Native American visitors arrived around 1819, when a group of soldiers were sent to construct Fort Snelling. Charlotte Van Cleve arrived with these soldiers, and considered the falls her favorite spot. Over the years, numerous painters and photographers have recorded countless images of Minnehaha Falls. In 1889, it became a park, protecting it for future generations. The history and beauty of the location are still appreciated by millions of visitors annually.

[Charlotte Van Cleve – Minnesota's Lady of Firsts:](#)

Charlotte Van Cleve (the daughter of Nathan and Charlotte Clark) was born in 1819, lived 87 eventful years, before passing away in Minnesota in 1907. She experienced three different transportation firsts in Minnesota - the arrival of the first steamboat (the Virginia) at Fort Snelling, the construction of the first railroad in Minnesota near Mendota, and the arrival of early automobiles. Over her lifetime, she met several U. S. Presidents – Andrew Jackson, Zachary Taylor, and Ulysses S. Grant. She was very involved in her community, the State of Minnesota, and the United States, supporting causes for women, the poor, Native Americans, and historical preservation (especially Fort Snelling and Minnehaha Falls).



6. Other

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