

Minnesota Bricks

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Minnesota Bricks

Exploring Historical Brickmaking & More in Minnesota

www.mnbricks.com

Chaska Brick

Brickmaking in Chaska Minnesota



www.chaskabrick.com



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1. What's New?

5000 YouTube Subscribers and Counting!

- I have been eagerly awaiting this milestone of hitting 5000 YouTube subscribers to the MN Bricks YouTube channel for several months now. I hope you all have been enjoying my YouTube creations for 2023 thus far.
- This year, I've been revisiting old spots to see how they've changed over the past 10+ years as well as capturing a few new ones. I appreciate all of your emails and comments. I do my best to respond, especially to the emails, but the volume makes it's difficult to keep up. As the fall moves into winter, I look forward to producing more videos of my travels from 2023. Keep passing along your suggestions and ideas for future videos as well as giving me feedback on what has already been produced.
- The YouTube videos 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>. Feel free to contact me at mnbricks@gmail.com any time.

2. Quarter 1 2023 Videos

January:

[The Kirk Farmstead – Niagara, North Dakota](#)

If you travel the back roads of any state, you come across a tie to the past. The Kirk farmstead is an abandoned farmstead in the middle of nowhere. Like many places in North Dakota, there are hardly any trees. The remaining farm buildings have seen their share of sun, wind, and cold, and don't have much time left.

February:

[The Winter of 1880-1881 in Morris, Minnesota](#)

The "Long Winter," as it was also known, brought an onslaught of blizzards, winter storms, and blowing snow events to the upper Midwest. From mid-October to early April, it was a 6 month stretch of seemingly endless storms. Several people died of exposure, cattle and poultry perished, and people in general suffered from a lack of food and fuel.

[Minnesota's Last Brickyard – Ochs Brick & Tile Company of Springfield, Minnesota](#)

Of the hundreds of brickyards through the years, the last Minnesota plant closed in 2016. This brickyard, which was located in Springfield, began as the A. C. Ochs Brick & Tile Company in 1891. See the abandoned grounds of Minnesota's last brickyard, with its the original clay pit, an old beehive kiln, and what remained in 2022 of this once thriving brickyard.

3. Quarter 2 2023 Videos

April:

[The Railroad vs. the Winter of 1880-1881](#)

Railroads are known for having unlimited money and power. Minnesota and Iowa winters can be long and brutal. During the winter of 1880-1881, these two combatants fought it out. Who was the winner? The Minnesota and Iowa winter of 1880-1881 beat the railroad with unrelenting wind and snow. Hear the many unbelievable stories from that long winter.

May:

[Riding the Red Jacket Trail on the Abandoned Central Railroad of Minnesota](#)

Many railroad lines across Minnesota have been abandoned. One of these lines was the Central Railroad of Minnesota. A portion of this railroad followed the Le Sueur and Blue Earth rivers from Rapidan into Mankato. Today, the old track from Rapidan to Mankato has been turned into a paved bike trail.

[Disappearing Minnesota Farms](#)

As the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota) metropolitan area continues to expand into rural areas, family farms that have existed for over 100 years are being swallowed up. See the changes on the southwest edge of the Twin Cities metropolitan area in sections 13 and 24 in Dahlgren Township, just west of the City of Carver.

[Early Minnesota Building Tycoon – Oliver R. Mather](#)

Oliver R. Mather built most of the early Minnesota institutions, which were huge complexes of brick buildings. He started at the bottom, making bricks by hand, and worked his way up to the top of his profession, becoming a master builder.

June:

[Church of the Sacred Heart – Freeport, Minnesota](#)

When driving along Interstate 94 in central Minnesota, the church steeple in Freeport is visible from miles around. The Church of the Sacred Heart is part of a complex of Catholic buildings on the southeast edge of Freeport that is over a century old. The Hess and Moog

brickyards, which was located just south of St. Cloud, provided the cream-colored brick for the church.

[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.

[Old Red Barns of Grand Forks County, North Dakota](#)

Most of the barns built across eastern North Dakota in the late 1800s were made of wood, painted in red. Unless protected from moisture, wood decays. Therefore, a lot of the original wooden farm buildings in North Dakota have fallen apart or been bulldozed. However, a few original wooden barns and outbuildings remain in the Red River Valley of North Dakota.



4. Other

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