

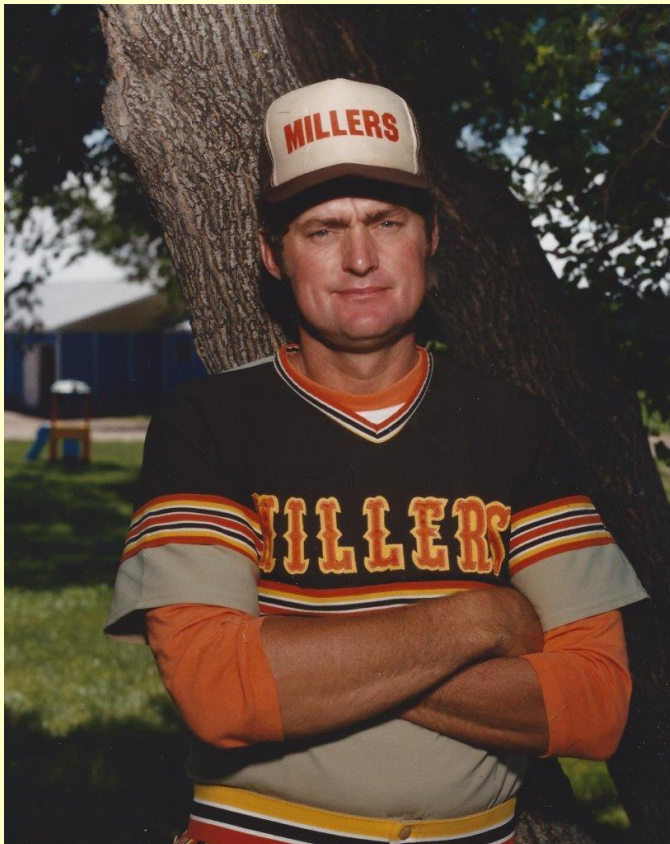
THE CENTER PIECE



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Another Local Hall of Famer

Kenny Bitzan had a passion for baseball from the time he was a little boy. Between chores on his parents' farm, he would be throwing a ball against the barn, so he wasn't too hard to find when he was supposed to be helping his dad. Kenny was inducted into the Minnesota State Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame on September 29, 2014; however, he was not present to receive this honor. He lost a two-year battle with cancer on June 2007 so his wife Marilyn accepted the honor for him.

Kenny joins Clarence Anderson of Brandon and Wendelin Koep, Sr., from Urbank as State Hall of

Famers from our area. Clarence Anderson was inducted in 1967; and Wendelin Koep, Sr., in 1984.

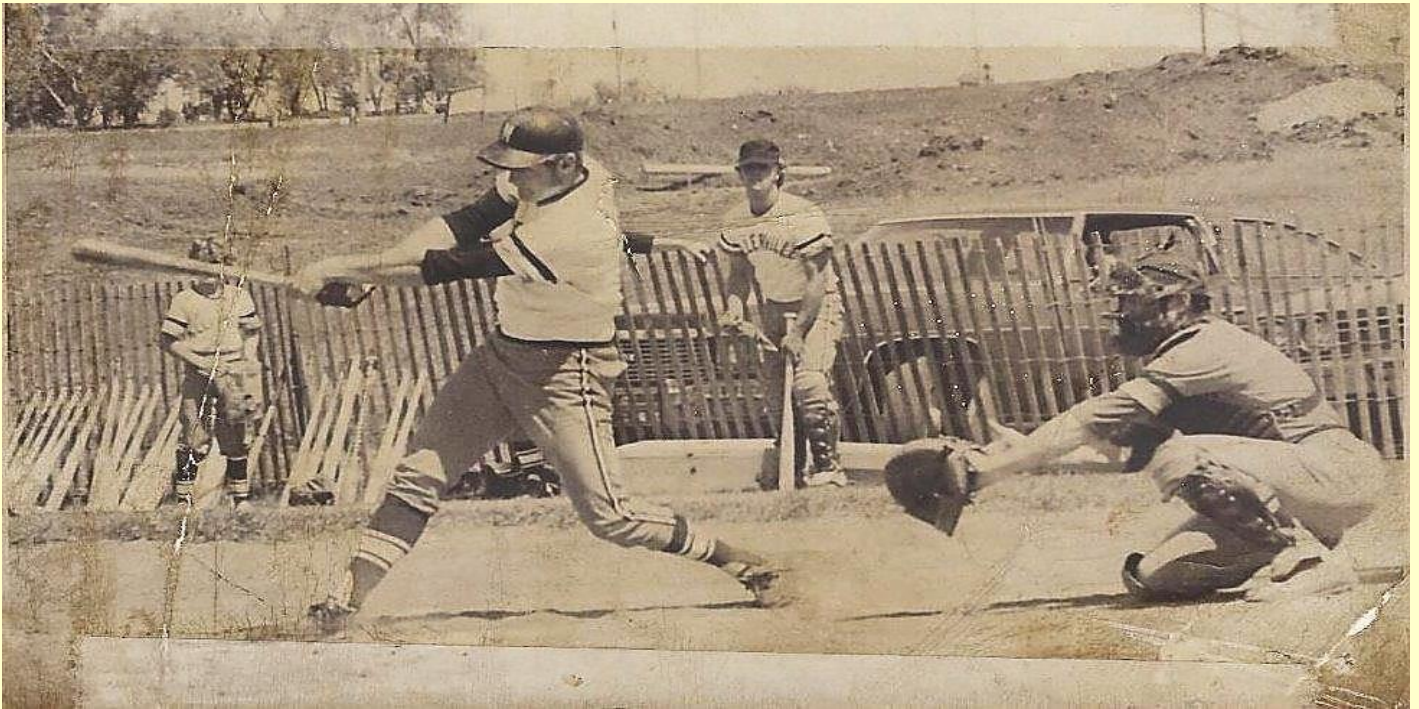
Kenny's baseball career had him playing for 45 years: in high school; playing Legion ball; playing for and managing the Millerville Millers; and later in life playing for the Urbank Goldtimers. He mainly played first and third base and did a little pitching and catching as well. He threw right-handed but batted left-handed, with 98 career home runs.

He was known as a very competitive player who loved the game. He made sure there were enough players on board for each game and helped keep the baseball field ready for games. He played with the Urbank Goldtimers up to a month before he died. He would bat and someone would run for him, which was typical of his dedication to his favorite sport.

Former teammate Paul Klimek said that Kenny gave the game of baseball everything he had and that he expected everyone else to give it their all too. Kenny's wife Marilyn said it was hard to describe being at the Hall of Fame and seeing the display case with his jersey and a ball engraved with his name on it. She said he would have been excited to be there, along with his family and friends.

Continued on page 2

Hall of Famer -- cont'd



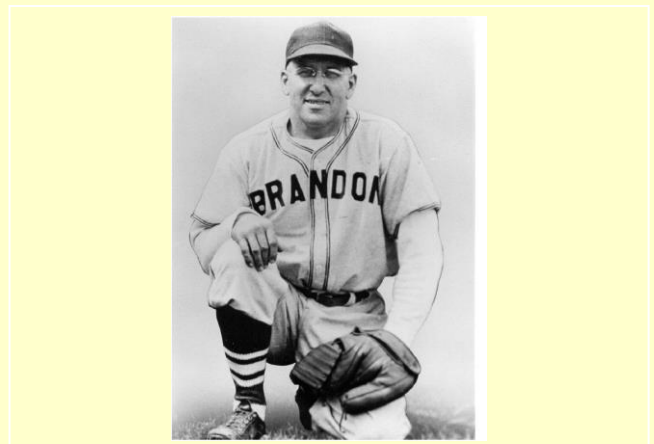
**1976 Picture of Kenny Bitzan batting, Dewey Otto on deck,
and Dan Byrne, bat boy, at Millers game**

Kenny was not only involved in baseball for most of his life. He was involved in his community. He was a fireman for 34 years and served as fire chief twice; he was president of the local sportsmen's club; and he served on the Millerville Creamery Board. He was a dairy farmer, but still had time to give back to his community.

Kenny did some umping and provided financial and moral support to the Millerville Summer Recreation Program.

Our congratulations go out to Kenny's family for accepting this honor for him.

"Minnesota is a state that loves its baseball. The state has a glorious past of minor leagues, semi-pro teams and of course, town teams. It is these small town teams that are the link from past to present. We here at the Minnesota Amateur Baseball Hall of Fame hope to preserve Minnesota's rich baseball history and pass it along to future generations. The Hall of Fame Museum is located on the second floor of the St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center and is open year round." (Taken from Hall of Fame Website)



**Clarence Anderson, Hall of Famer from Brandon -
inducted 1967.**

From the Past . . . Brandon Banks 1900 to 2015

When two identical Brandon State Bank souvenirs (pictured below) were recently donated to the History Center by Brad Bjerken and John Peterson, we thought it might be interesting to trace the history of banking in Brandon.



First National Bank of Brandon

Sometime later a new bank was built at the 1902 location but closer to the intersection of Front Street and Central Avenue. On June 16, 1916, the State Bank became known as the First National Bank of Brandon. Tollef Jacobsen was the president, and Ferd Swenson was cashier. This bank closed in 1926.



The above photo is a First National Bank of Brandon \$10 note, and it is real. From about 1793 -1861, approximately 1,600 private banks were permitted by the government to print and circulate their own paper currency under state charters. During the period from 1863 to 1929, the government again allowed many banks to issue their own notes, called "national bank notes"; but unlike the earlier "state bank notes," they were printed on paper authorized by the U.S. government and carried the same basic design. Ferd Swenson's signature is still legible on the \$10 note. As far as we know, three of these notes have survived.



Brandon State Bank

Brandon State Bank was organized in 1902. It was located west of our current post office, north of Hilltop Lumber, approximately where Knotty Pine is now located. O. F. Olson was president; Anton Strom, vice president; Theodore F. Olson (son to O. F.), cashier; Joseph M. Tamble, assistant cashier. It had capital assets of \$25,000 and had a surplus of \$6,000 according to the 1911 souvenir.

From the Past . . . cont'd



Farmers State Bank

Farmers State Bank was established in 1910. It was located at 113 East Front Street (the present Bremer location). The first officers were P.O. Unumb, president; B.T. Teigen, vice president; George Drexler and Axel Burkee, cashiers; Edwin Berg, assistant cashier. The bank closed in the 1920s.



Citizens State Bank

The Farmers State Bank was purchased by Otto Bremer and opened under the name Citizens State Bank in 1927 and operated under this name until 1988, when all Bremer Banks were using the name First American Bank. In 1998, the name was again changed to Bremer Bank.



The above two photographs show the progression of Citizens State Bank to Bremer Bank on Brandon's main business thoroughfare.

Although three earlier banks closed in Brandon, they provided much needed financial resources to businesses, farmers, and homeowners.

Thank you to the Cub Scouts who visited the History Center recently.



Veterans' Corner



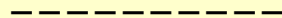
Donald Hermanson

Donald Hermanson was drafted into the United States Army on August 18, 1942, at Fort Snelling. He attended schooling in Sedalia, MO; Tampa, FL; Savannah, GA; and in California as a teletype operator in the Army Air Force. He was shipped to Bora Bora, New Caledonia, and then to Hawaii where he was assigned to Iwo Jima for nine months until the end of World War II. He arrived home on November 2, 1945. He earned the rank of corporal and served as a Teletype Operator with the Signal Corps Wing of the Army Air Force. Donald was awarded several medals. He passed away May 10, 2015.



Bernie Bitzan

Bernie Bitzan enlisted in the US Air Force on his eighteenth birthday in 1944. He attended basic training at Shepard Field in Wichita Falls, Texas. Bernie served in France and Germany as part of the occupational forces. After 14 days on a troop ship, he landed at Normandy Beach in France. After spending about a week in a tent under very cold conditions at Camp Philip Morris, he boarded a French train for Fürstenfeldbruck, Germany. His unit was assigned jobs in the airplane parts department at the base, where they classified and packed parts for shipment back to the US. He was discharged in October 1946, and returned to the Millerville area. He passed away May 22, 2015.



Memorials – Thank you . .

- Margaret Lauthen, \$100 in memory of Paul
- Kay Larson, \$50 in memory of Corky Slack.
- Joan Fjoslien, \$20 in memory of Will Bjerkness.
- Bruce and Janet Nelson, in memory of Zachary and Connor Kvalvog, grandsons of Phil and Lola Haak Kvalvog.

Thank you to . . .

Brad Bjerken and John Peterson for the identical Brandon State Bank souvenir pictures (see p. 3).

Thank you also to Bremer Bank for donating the framed "Boom in Brandon" picture below.



Brandon History Center

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BOARD MEMBERS:

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Ruth Plaster
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We're on the Web! Visit us at:

www.brandonmn.com

Our Mission Statement

To collect preserve and display articles, pictures, and memorabilia from Brandon, Millerville, and the surrounding area for future generations.

To assist in the preservation of the Historic Brandon Auditorium and other local historic sites.

Notice of Annual Meeting

The Brandon History Center will hold its 2015 annual meeting on Monday, October 5, 2015, at 7 p.m. at the history center office at 105 Holmes Avenue, Brandon, Minnesota. Election of Board Members is on the agenda. If interested in serving, please contact one of the Board members.