

The Center Piece

Summer 2022

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A Round Barn in Brandon Township

If you are ever driving north of Brandon, MN on County Rd 16, look to your right at the first farm site north of the town to see a very unique structure – the last remaining original round barn still standing in Douglas County. The white-painted barn is considered to be round but actually has 16 sides, with horizontal siding, a 2-pitch segmented roof and an octagon louvered cupola.

The barn was built in 1913 by Alden Emil Linnard. His father, John A. Linnard, homesteaded just north of this site and later added the 80 acres on which this farm site was built by his son.

A little history on round barns. Most round barns were built on dairy farms between 1890-1920. As cities expanded and connected to railroads, shipping fresh milk from the rural areas became much easier, opening up new opportunities for dairymen. Farmers back then wanted to enlarge their cow herds and looked for efficiencies. So, the idea was to arrange the cows around a central feeding trough with the heads toward the center of the barn, and the business end in the larger circumference of the round barn.

Often less material was required for a round barn as opposed to rectangular. People also thought that wind would go around the barn, sparing it from a storm's destructive forces. A round barn certainly had its positives, but not everyone was crazy about it.

And you had to be a little tough because your neighbors would probably give you a hard time. They might mock you for building something so unusual and novel. And your local carpenter was not very excited because he was dealing with an awful lot of geometry that he was unfamiliar with.

The round barn was built for dairying, and not as useful for other types of agriculture. Their popularity ended by the 1920s. Their demise was accelerated by an agricultural depression after the end of WWI and the onset of prefabricated barns. At one time, there were about 250 round barns in Minnesota. Less than 50 remain today.



Brandon History Center Meeting

The Brandon History Center Board held a special meeting on April 4, 2022. At that meeting the resignation of Janet Nelson from the board was accepted. The BHC appreciates the many years of volunteering that Janet has done.

The main topic of the progress of the Auditorium Building Video history and plans for the premiere of the video.

Homesteading in the 1800's

Do you ever wonder who was the original owner of your family farm and how it was acquired? The State of Minnesota was first opened up for private ownership of land in 1848. However, it wasn't until the early 1860's that the Federal land in and around Douglas County was first claimed and settled. The Brandon and Millerville Townships were settled primarily from about 1865 to around 1876. These early settlers know as "homesteaders" were a mix of farmers, businessmen and land speculators. Many were Civil War veterans.

A homesteader could acquire land in a variety of ways. Some claimed land under the Homestead Act of 1862. Others purchased with cash or used script issued under the Script Warrant Act of 1855 or the State Grant-Agri College Act of 1862. In fact, most of the land in these two townships was acquired using cash or script. The going price for land during this time was \$1.25 per acre.

Title to the land upon completion of the Homestead Act provisions or upon presenting cash or script was in the form of a "Land Patent" issued by the Federal Government through a US General Land Office, which for this area was in St Cloud, MN (a long buggy ride) prior to the opening of the Alexandria Land Office in November, 1868.

You can search the General Land Office Records at glorecord.blm.gov/search/ to discover the original owner of any parcel and their method of payment.

Homestead Act of 1862

This act was signed during the US Civil War and granted a homestead of 160 acres of public land to any US citizen willing to settle on and farm the land. Any citizen who had never taken up arms against the US government and was at least 21 years old or the head of a household, including women, could file an application to claim a federal land grant. The occupant had to reside on the land for five years and show evidence of making improvements. Some BLM records on file include such documents as proof of citizenship, description of buildings constructed, and sworn affidavits from neighbors as to living on the land for five years. Interesting family history!

Script Warrant Act of 1855

From 1775 to 1885, the United States granted land warrants for military service, primarily to encourage voluntary enlistments, but also to reward veterans for service during a number of wars. These certificates could be redeemed for up to 160 acres of public land and were quickly sold and then traded on Wall Street to land agents in the western territories who made huge profits selling them to struggling farmers. The Script Warrant Act of 1855 expanded the areas of the country where the warrants could be used to include Minnesota. Patents issued under this act include information such as the veteran in whose name they were issued as well as rank, military unit and war served in.

State Grant-Agri College Act of 1862

Under this act, each state that had not rebelled against the US Government received 30,000 acres of federal land within its boundaries for each member of congress the state had as of the census of 1860. The land or proceeds from the sale was to be used toward establishing colleges that taught agricultural and mechanical arts in addition to other areas of study. If a state had no available land, it issued warrants for the purchase of up to 160 acres in other states to include Minnesota. Patents issued under this act include the name of the original state of issue.

The flagship of the University of Minnesota System, the Twin Cities campus, is Minnesota's only land-grant university and one of the most prestigious public research universities in the nation.



Olson Log House—Millerville area

Thank you!

To everyone who requested research on family members, other Brandon/Millerville research, or other, that we are glad help. Thank you to all who have donated money, items for our history collections, and information about people of the area for our family files.

Gifts and accessions:

- Brandon Fire Department—\$2000 for the Auditorium Birthday Party
- Clement Bitzan—monetary donation of \$1000
- Cletus Bitzan—monetary donation of \$1000
- Family of Lila Hanson—monetary donation and various items
- Kay Larson—monetary donation of \$100, in memory of Karen Schjei
- Brandon School—various photos and trophies
- Eugene Stene—photos, newspaper articles, other memorabilia
- Barbara Clarkson—monetary donation
- Karen Thoennes—advertising memorabilia
- Mike Cleary—Douglas County Plat directory
- Ken Kuhn, Florence & Dave Bitzan—Millerville Creamery awards of Leonard Winkels
- Dean Plaster—brass fire hose nozzle
- Evansville Historical Society—3 scrapbooks of Brandon interest

Come to Celebrate Our Brandon Auditorium Turning 86 years Old



Premier Showing of a 30 minute video produced by AMS Digital Productions. The video highlights the history of this unique building in our community. Showing times will be 1:30 PM and 3 PM

Join us for a Birthday Party Lunch anytime during the video showings.

Saturday July 16th
Brandon Auditorium

Sponsored by
the Brandon Fire Department

Veterans Corner

Clement Bitzan

Unites States Army—Cold War Era



Clement Bitzan joined the Unites States Army in Alexandria, MN May 29, 1957. He received his Basic Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. He served most of his duty at Fort Knox, Kentucky where he learned all aspects of Army training and was assigned the position of Tank Commander in his unit.

Clement was honorably discharged

August 14, 1959

Clement passed away on April 23, 2022 and was interned at the Our Lady of Seven Dolors Cemetery in Millerville, MN.

Membership Information

Annual Memberships are \$10 for individuals, \$15 for family. Life time memberships are \$150 for individuals and \$200 for family.

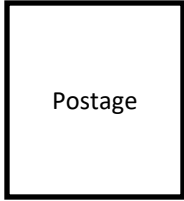
In addition to renewing you membership, you may want to consider a tax deductible charitable contribution of \$100 more to the History Center. The Brandon History center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

With a \$100 donation, the donation is remembered on the wall plaque with either your own name or in memory of a family member or friend.

History Center Hours

The History Center hours are by appointment. It is open for research or to donate items of historical value such as family pictures and stories. Email brandonhistory@gctel.net to arrange a time for a visit or to drop off your items.

Brandon History Center
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P. O Box 514
Brandon, MN 56315



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Email: brandonhistory@gctel.net
Website: www.BrandonHistoryCenter.org
Blog: <http://brandonhistorycenter.blogspot.com>
Facebook: Brandon History Center

BOARD MEMBERS:

- Florence Bitzan
- Carol Ramler
- Mike Cleary
- Ruth Plaster
- Cheryl Johnson
- Karen Thoennes

Our Mission Statement

To collect and preserve the history of Brandon, Millerville, and the surrounding area for future generations.

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

Trivia

1. What was the name of the first sportsmen’s club in the county?
2. What road which passed through Douglas County in 1858 was built by the United States Army?
3. What Moe Township resident has served on the Town Board, has been on the Legion Board, and was a member of the “Tootin Gramps” when it was organized?

From the Douglas Country Trivia game published by the Douglas County Historical Society 1986

1. Brandon Fin and Feather Club — 2. Fort Abercrombie Trail 3. Olander Sletto