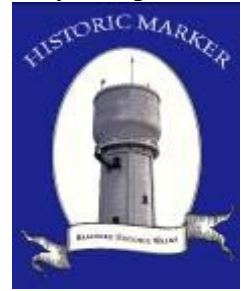


## Brainerd Historic Markers, variations-modern-day (post 1970):

In 1971, 18 cast aluminum markers were produced for Brainerd's Centennial. None was erected by that time, but 8 were put up in 1976 for the nation's Bicentennial. In 2008, 8 more were found, and the Brainerd History Group was able to install 4 of these, so there are 4 yet to be installed. Two are missing, but we hope to someday recreate them and complete the job. When these were found, we couldn't help but think how many other places could have been earmarked for designation back in 1971. But then, some of these locations we'd now like to mark were either hidden, or just now newly discovered. Digitizing of maps and newspapers has made research easier for anyone with a computer and the internet. We thought that was the end of historic marking in Brainerd.



37 years passed with no historic markers being placed. But in 2008, for the state's sesquicentennial, the newly-formed Brainerd History Group created the Brainerd History Walk. This identified several locations of historical interest in about a 4 block area in downtown. A brochure was made, but no funding was available for markers. Then in 2011, the Brainerd Public Library was able to secure a grant for making a bound booklet for the Walk, which can now be checked out at the library. An audio version and even a printable version were also made, so just about anybody, anywhere can enjoy the Walk. Part of the grant was for small plastic markers for these locations; they are a marker only, with no image or wording, but they work well for spotting the site as one walks. At some point a QR code could be made to link from a smart phone to each location's website and full description.



In 2009 The Brainerd History Group made marker of stenciled aluminum after they excavated the Brainerd Brewing company site. These run about \$40 apiece. The pedestal is made of Brainerd-made Schwartz Milwaukee Cream bricks found on the site. Plexiglass had to be added because of vandalism in this rather remote location.



Some other smaller markers are made simply and cheaply of 8-1/2 x 11" paper behind plexiglass, such as the one on Boom Lake for the Ski Jump. These can be made for under \$20.



In 2013 the first marker for a building on the National Register of Historic Places was placed. There are MANY more buildings with this designation, so it is strange that more are not marked! These run about \$180.

In 2013 Brainerd received a grant to make the Buffalo Hills Trail. In addition, another grant was secured to make 4 easel-type Fossil Brand Historic Markers for along this trail. Local researchers went to work locating images and wording for these markers, and they will be placed in the spring of 2014. The 4 are along East River Road, and around Kiwanis Park. These easel-style markers are much larger, largely graffiti-proof, UV resistant, come with a double post mount, and provide enough room for a large image and lots of wording. Since the city secured the grant, their logo appears on each one. The locations marked are:

- Lyman P. White
- Steamboat Landing
- Boom Lake
- Boom Lake Spur Line

Official City of Brainerd Trail Markers (4):

## LYMAN P. WHITE



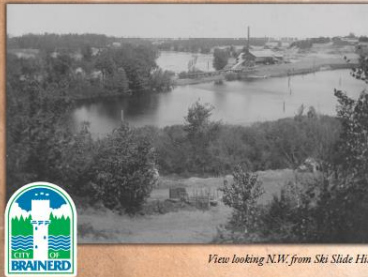
Lyman P. White came to Brainerd via stagecoach from St. Cloud in 1870 at age 60, already successful as a Vermont legislator and railroader. White was an agent for the Lake Superior and Puget Sound Land Company, which specialized in planting towns and selling lots for the Northern Pacific Railroad. He was often called the Father of Brainerd for his role in starting the town. He had a sawmill on the river bank south of the tracks and a small planing mill on South Fifth Street. White built the first frame house in town, was the first city council president and second mayor. He helped organize the First National Bank, first school district, and the Episcopal Church. White died in 1902 at the age of 91 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

## STEAMBOAT LANDING



Steamboats served Brainerd beginning about 1871 at a landing here and a west landing just above the present Washington Street Bridge. This landing also had a ferry service. In 1877, a Brainerd firm, Alsop & Mahlum, built a side-wheeler named White Swan 70' long, with a 16' beam and 3' draft. These small steamboats could haul 30-100 tons of freight, but were limited by low water in late summer and the added width of the side-wheel in the upper river. Commerce between Crow Wing to the south and Pokegama Falls near Grand Rapids to the north was interrupted by Brainerd's dam in 1887. The dam provided water and power for Brainerd and controlled water flow and improved navigation above the dam. Steamboat service upriver from Brainerd ended in the 1920's.

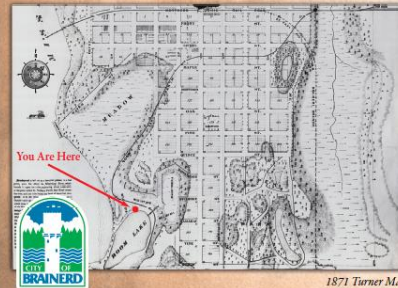
## BOOM LAKE



Boom Lake, with a natural channel to the Mississippi River, got its name because here loggers could collect and contain floating timber into a log boom. Eber H. Bly purchased a small sawmill and moved it to the area between Boom Lake and the river. In 1871, the railroad built a railroad spur to serve the mill. J. J. Howe purchased the sawmill in 1876 and greatly expanded it, employing 150 or more men. Many workers were seriously hurt or killed in the dangerous conditions at the sawmill and in the river. The J. J. Howe Mill was destroyed by fire in 1896 and was never rebuilt. The Boom Lake Branch spur also served the brewery on the east side of the lake.

*View looking NW from Ski Slide Hill*

## BOOM LAKE SPUR LINE



The "Boom Lake Branch" railroad spur line, the first intra-city line, was laid in 1871. It serviced the huge J.J. Howe sawmill built between Boom Lake and the Mississippi River, which made much-needed lumber from logs floated down the river. In its heyday, the mill produced five or six rail cars of lumber, shingles, and lath daily. The spur was long and gradual to accommodate the 55' drop in elevation from Brainerd to the flats by the lake. The track extended west from the main line on 11th Street South, turned southwest near the present library, proceeded down the hill to the river, then east around the north end of Boom Lake, ending near the 1880's brewery site on the east shore. The old spur grade is now part of the Kiwanis Park walking trail.

*1871 Turner Map*

We have identified more sites to be marked, and some of these are already marked with Brainerd History Walk blue markers. But now that we have a template and pricing structure, we are looking for more spots to mark with the easel markers. Several have been identified, so the hunt for funding begins. These markers run just under \$700, are roughly 3' x 2', but it does not include installation which requires checking with the city for underground hazards, and some cement. Some markers might come from private sources for marking their own sites, in which case the City seal would not be included. However, if we can get the City to do the installation, this contribution "in kind" might be a good reason to include the City logo. Also, we need to look ahead in case there are more markers to follow. They should appear consistent as if they are in the same 'series'.

We won't be able to put a \$700 marker on all of the locations, but we might place the \$20 one, or even just a \$2 piece of paper marker in a window for now!

Here are some sites we have identified:

- Arlington Hotel
- Armory, first, Laurel St.-1936
- Bly's Hall, Front St.
- Brainerd-Cuyuna Mining Co.: South Brainerd on Wright St., c. 1913
- Carnegie Library-1904
- Dolly Varden Saloon, Front St.-1873
- Dry Milk Plant
- City Jail, First-1874, N 5<sup>th</sup> St.
- Columbia Block, S 6<sup>th</sup> St. (same location as Iron Exchange Building)
- County Jail & Sheriff's Residence, first, Washington St.-1882
- County Jail/Sheriff's Residence-1917
- Fire Hall, second, S 5th St.

- Fitzsimons Building (State Guard)**, now Minnesota School of Diving
- Schwartz Brainerd Steam Brickyards**
- Sixth Street School**, S 6<sup>th</sup> & Oak Sts.-1873
- Hickerson Garment Factory**
- Hobo Park**
- Kampmann Sash & Door**
- Milt Askew's Billiard Hall**-1873
- Nash Finch Building**
- Northern Pacific Depot, second**
- Northern Pacific Foundry (Parker-Topping)**
- Northern Pacific Railroad Freight Depot**-1904
- Northern Pacific Hospital**
- Northern Pacific Hotel, Front St.** (oldest non-residential building?)
- Northern Pacific Tie Plant**
- Northern Pacific YMCA**
- Northwestern Hospital**
- Post Office**-1910
- Pump House**, N 7<sup>th</sup> St., at the river
- Saint Francis Church-First-1871**, N 5<sup>th</sup> St.
- Sleeper Opera House**, S 8<sup>th</sup> St.
- Tourist Park**, East River Road
- Villard Hotel**
- Werner Hemstead House**, N 4<sup>th</sup> St.

-CWF, 4/17/2013

UPDATED: 1/1/2018