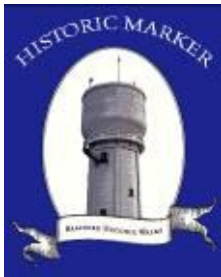


# Brainerd Historic Markers, modern-day, done, planned and WISH LIST (post-1970):

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. -4/17/2013 Read below to see how far we really **HAVE** come since this writing!



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 a marker of stenciled aluminum after they excavated the Brainerd Brewing company site. These run about \$48 apiece, made locally at Action Graphics in Baxter. 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.



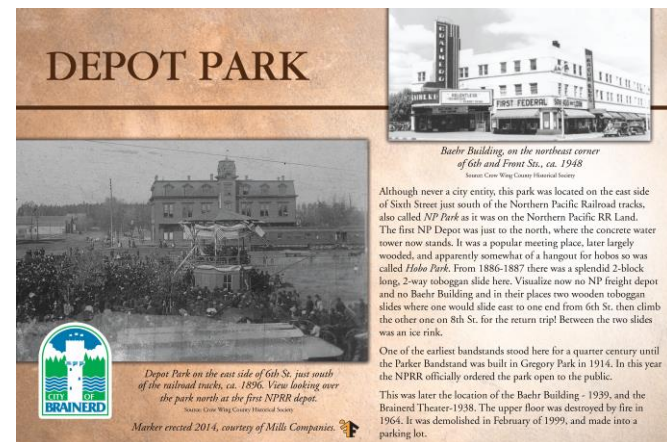
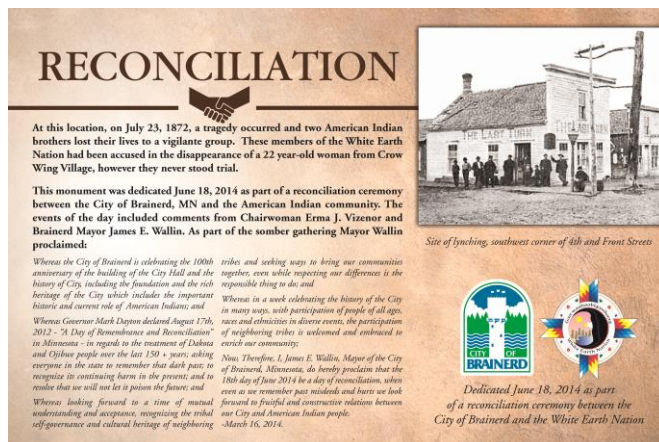
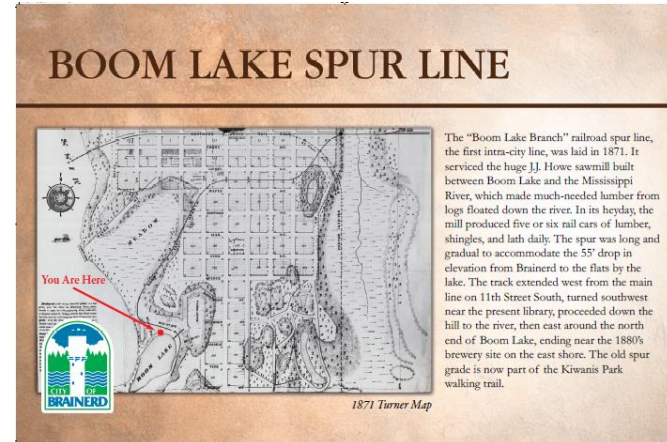
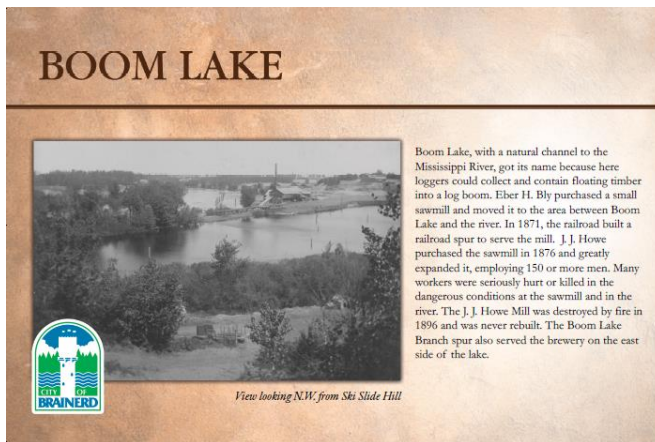
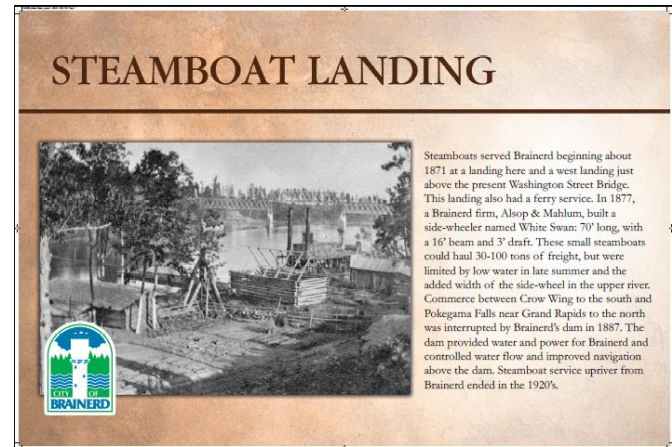
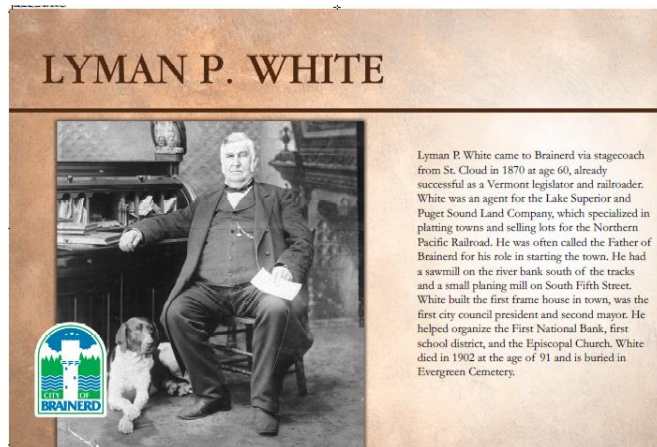
In 2013 Brainerd received a grant to make the **Buffalo Hills Trail**. In addition, another grant was secured to make 4 easel-type Fossil Brand Historic Markers for along this trail. Local researchers went to work locating images and wording for these markers, and they will be placed in the spring of 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

-Reconciliation

-Depot Park

## Official City of Brainerd Trail Markers (4) (6):



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 "graphic" markers. Several have been identified, so the hunt for funding begins. These markers run \$1260, are roughly 3' x 2', but do not include installation which requires checking with the city for underground hazards and labor and some cement. Some funding for markers might come from private sources for marking their own sites, in which case the City seal would still be included since the city street Dept. Has been doing all of the installations. Thank you, City of Brainerd! We were able to reduce that cost by Kevin at



Lakes Printing donating the setup work, about \$400 each. I would think there should be a local company that could replicate the markers for less. We won't be able to put a \$1200 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! Note that the \$1200 can be reduced to about \$700 if someone donates the setup fees and does it locally.

#### 2020/7/31 UPDATE:

A new low-priced sign has been developed a few years ago. These "green markers" are made locally for under \$50 and can accept photos like the more expensive ones. They are aluminum, 18 x 12", with vinyl printing, and seem to hold up well to direct sunlight. These are like the typical No Parking-type signs one sees all over most towns. Installation can be on 4 x 4" wood posts, or lately, the city has been providing used steel signposts and discarded thicker aluminum signs as backing. On the list, look for Green Marker. Keep in mind the green markers don't have to be green, and could be tan like the graphic ones, or any other color. We only used green as it's a typical city park color for signage. With 7 installed, they do kind of catch the eye now as historical marker. Action Graphics needs the copy sent as a PDF. Example, but the real thing is a bit brighter green:

#### Park Opera House, installed 2020:

### Park Opera House, Paramount Theater

This wonderful building was the site of a popular fixture in Brainerd for over 90 years. This gorgeous building was built as the **Park Opera House**, and started under somewhat unusual circumstances, being built by a "Corporation Composed of Prominent Brainerd Business Men" in 1901, for use as an opera house AND City Hall, until the new one was built on Laurel St. in 1914, and provided space for the electric department in the basement. After the 1928 High School fire, some rooms served as classrooms. At some point, at least 1931, that back top third floor on the rear/west side was completely removed, and the whole building received a flatter roof, yet it is unclear why. Follow the news articles below through the years to see the descriptions and different stages the building went through as opera gave way to moving pictures.

**1901:** "Fifteen men subscribed \$1,000 each," he impressively declared today in an interview, "and will build a first-class opera house. The idea to build what would be the Park Opera House and City Hall building was broached to the Brainerd City Council by five men—Frank B. Johnson, A. F. Ferris, Ransford Rudolph Wise, George LaBar and George Holland."

**1914:** The **Brainerd Opera House** has been remodeled into the **New Park Theatre!** "The People's Playhouse." At that time, silent movies were gaining in popularity over vaudeville.

**1915:** **BRAINERD THEATRE & AMUSEMENT CO.** now Controls "Best," "Grand," "Empress" Theatres and the Brainerd Opera House, **CLYDE E. PARKER, PRESIDENT.** Brainerd picture houses and the opera house are now consolidated under one management for the Brainerd Theatre & Amusement Co., recently formed with Clyde E. Parker as president and treasurer, F. S. Workman as general manager and Kirk J. Smith as assistant manager and secretary, have closed a lease of the Brainerd opera house.


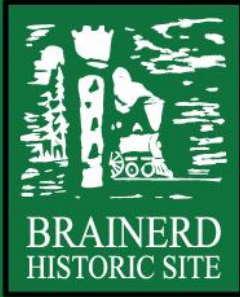



**1918:** **Clyde E. Parker** purchased the Park in and promptly changed its name to the **New Park Theatre.**

**1919:** Finkelstein & Ruben have secured a 25-year lease of the Park Theatre site and additional ground and have signed a deal buying the interests of Clyde E. Parker.

**1929:** "**PARAMOUNT**" NAME OF NEW THEATRE. 5,000 Lights to Blazon Entrance to Publix Theatre on Front St., seats 800 people. The latest improvement in ventilation in theatres will be installed here. **Each breath taken by the patron in the theatre will be from air drawn through city spring water.** This system will also make it possible to lower the temperature of the building on warm summer days. All air taken into the building will be washed of impurities. A neon electric sign pointing to the new Paramount Theatre on Front St. will be erected soon will be put across 6th St. from the corner of the Northern Pacific park to the Y. M. C. A. corner. The 35' long x 11' high structure will clear the street by 18'.

**1940s:** The building was bought by Baehr Theaters. **1971:** The Park Opera House was declared a **historic site** in the Minnesota Historic Sites Survey conducted that year. **1986:** The BN Railroad has agreed to lease the site of the old Paramount Theater to the Brainerd Lakes Arts Center, Inc. plans to convert the 1900-vintage movie theatre into a \$2.5 million arts center. **1987:** Brainerd's historic Park Opera House, later the Paramount Theatre, faces an uncertain future. The building, built in 1901, is **structurally sound**, but there have been no buyers thus far. The original asking price was \$100,000 but now is half that. If there are no offers, it will be torn down. Remodeling costs have been estimated at \$1.5 million. **1994/4/20:** The east wall of the empty Paramount Theatre was brought down.

-2019 Brainerd History Week Committee, and thanks to the City of Brainerd Street Dept. for installation of this marker.



Here are some sites we have identified as potential locations for markers, The Wish List:

-plastic placard written and planned=funding secured (still, I hope), just not printed.

**NOTE:** these are a different size than the 2018 ones at 12 x 12", now planned as 11 x 14" to fit better on vertical poles, less wide to not hit a person's head, and taller for more content, yet the price was the same.

As to funding, keep in mind that many business owners might be glad to spend \$50 to draw attention to their classic building and its history. As more go up, it may become a me-too movement! The Foy's at Design Consign have mentioned they would be a candidate, and there is a spot for it above the 1971 marker, where the bank mark once was. If anyone out there would lie to try your hand at writing the copy for a marker, have at it, and this would be a good one!

**NOTE:** There are also 3 **kiosks** in town:

Gregory Park

Lum Park

Kiwanis Park

Items marked **NEW!** are since this list was "combined" with all marker lists on 3/11/2021.

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### **Marker list (color-coded):**

- Adam Brown Well-plastic placard planned
- Anderson Mercantile (former Red & White groc.)- plastic placard planned
- Arlington Hotel
- Armory, first, Laurel St.-1936
- Bly's Hall, Front St.- plastic placard planned
- Bone's Corner-plastic placard planned
- Boom Lake Skating Rink-plastic placard written and planned
- Boom Lake Ski Slide-plastic placard written and planned
- Brainerd Electric Railway Co. -plastic placard written and planned
- Brainerd Gas & Electric-plastic placard written and planned
- Brainerd Lumber Co. -plastic placard written and planned (I am missing the placard file.)
- Brainerd-Cuyuna Mining Co.: South Brainerd on Wright St., c. 1913-plastic placard written and planned
- Bredenberg Grocery-plastic placard written and planned
- Broadway St, over the years-plastic placard written and planned
- Carnegie Library-1904-plastic placard written and planned
- City Dump
- City Jail, First-1874, N 5<sup>th</sup> St.
- Colonist's Reception House-plastic placard written and planned
- Columbia Block, S 6<sup>th</sup> St. (same location as Iron Exchange Building)
- County Jail & Sheriff's Residence, first, Washington St.-1882-DONE, graphic marker
- County Jail/Sheriff's Residence-1917
- Courthouse, First- Green Marker-On the way, 2021.
- Dam at Brainerd-plastic placard written and planned
- Dolly Varden Saloon, Front St.-1873
- Dry Milk Plant
- Evergreen Cemetery Vault-plastic placard written and planned
- Fill, The-plastic placard written and planned
- Fire Hall, second, S 5<sup>th</sup> St.
- First National Bank: **NEW!**
- Fitzsimons Building (State Guard), now Minnesota School of Diving
- Franklin School-plastic placard written and planned
- Front St. -plastic placard written and planned
- \*Grandelmyer Block at 612 Front
- Gregory Park-kiosk
- Hickerson Garment Factory
- Hobo Park-DONE, graphic marker

- Kampmann Sash & Door
- Kiwanis Park-kiosk
- Lakeland Building-plastic placard written and planned
- Laurel St. Bridge, 1898-Green Marker 2 of 3 DONE, another on the way 2021 for the museum front.
- Lum Park-kiosk
- Mahlum Bridge-East Laurel St. Bridge-plastic placard written and planned
- Milt Askew's Billiard Hall-1873
- Nash Finch Building
- Northern Pacific Depot, second
- Northern Pacific Foundry (Parker-Topping)-plastic placard written and planned
- Northern Pacific Hospital - Green Marker-On the way, 2021. NEW!
- Northern Pacific Hotel, Front St. (oldest non-residential building?)
- Northern Pacific Railroad Freight Depot-1904-plastic placard written and planned
- Northern Pacific Shops & Clock Tower Green Marker-DONE
- Northern Pacific Tie Plant
- Northern Pacific YMCA
- Northwestern Hospital
- Park Opera House- Green Marker DONE
- Palace Theater
- Parker-Topping Foundry-plastic placard written and planned
- Pearce Block-plastic placard written and planned
- Post Office-1910
- Pump House, N 7<sup>th</sup> St., at the river
- Ransford Hotel Green Marker On the way, 2021!
- Rosko Field Green Marker DONE
- Saint Francis Church-First-1871, N 5<sup>th</sup> St.
- Schwartz Brainerd Steam Brickyards
- Schwartz Brickyard-plastic placard written and planned
- Sixth Street School, S 6<sup>th</sup> & Oak Sts.-1873-We still have a 1971 marker, but should add a green marker.
- Sleeper Opera House, S 8<sup>th</sup> St.
- Streetcar Era-plastic placard written and planned
- Toltz Gas Palnt-plastic placard written and planned
- Tourist Park, East River Road
- Trading Post-plastic placard written and planned
- Villard Hotel-plastic placard written and planned
- \*Walverman Block
- Washington St. Bridge-plastic placard written and planned -Werner Hemstead House, N 4<sup>th</sup> St.
- Werner Hemstead House-plastic placard written and planned
- Whiskey Creek Spur Line
- \*\*White Brothers Hardware store
- White Park- Green Marker DONE
- Whittier School-plastic placard written and planned
- Woodland Park-plastic placard written and planned (3/11/2021: To be changed to a green marker.) NEW!

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\*How about adding the Walverman Block owned by Elizabeth "Lizzie" M. Koop and built by the White Brothers (Isaac U. and Charles B.), and the Grandelmyer Block at 612 Front, owned by Caroline Grandelmyer. These are the only two WOMAN-built and owned buildings still standing--it would be nice if people knew that women were capable of owning and building things like buildings. -AMN, 3/11/2021

-\*\*White Brothers Hardware store on Laurel (originally owned by I.U. & C.B. White) that became Alderman-Maghan in 1920 that burned down in 1987. -AMN

-CWF, 4/17/2013, UPDATED: 3/11/2021