



Sundial

The sundial, one of the earliest scientific instruments, tells time by measuring the passage of the sun through its daily course in the sky. The vast majority of sundials consist of a pointer, called a style or gnomon, and a calibrated plate upon which the pointer casts a shadow.

This sundial was made in 1835 by Philip Brady of Etna. Brady, the youngest son of Philip Brady and Eleanor Downs, was born on May 16, 1796 in Dublin, Ireland. Philip Brady Sr. was a clerk in the Custom House in Dublin, but was compelled to

leave Ireland after taking part in the unsuccessful Rebellion of 1798. Philip Brady Jr. Stayed in Ireland and learned the tailor's trade, then worked in Manchester, England. He landed in New York in the fall of 1824 and worked there for nearly 5 years. Further travels took him to Hartford, Albany, Dryden, Ithaca and Canandaigua. While on his way back to New York City, he became sick near Salina and remained there all summer. He then came to Etna, where he married Julia Weed, daughter of Rice and Persmelia Weed. Brady died July 23, 1878 at Etna, at the age of 82 years old.

This 13-inch square stone sundial has a metal gnomon. There is a directional map in the center of the dial and numbers are engraved around the perimeter on three sides.

This sundial came into the possession of Miss Grace Hanford and Mrs. John Brooks, who were nieces of Brady, and it was donated to the History Center by John G. Brooks of Ithaca.

Sources: DeWitt Historical Society Accession Files; Encyclopedia Britannica