

THE ROUND BARN

8585 Parrish Ave NE, Otsego, MN

TOWNSHIP OF OTSEGO
est. 1858



The Round Barn (circa 1920)
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation



Ferdinand and Zerilla Lefebvre (1929)
Credit: Otsego Heritage Preservation



John Lefebvre (circa 1990)
Credit: Kevin Lefebvre



Noel and Mae Lefebvre, (1970)
Credit: Kevin Lefebvre

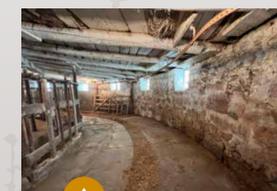
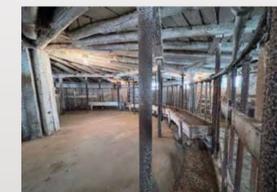
The Lefebvre family is an integral part of the history of Otsego, both old and new.

The Lefebvre name in Otsego started with Ferdinand Lefebvre, who immigrated from Canada to this area in 1875. He married Zerilla Bourgeois, the oldest daughter of an Otsego farmer (who had also immigrated from Canada in 1844). Ferdinand and Zerilla Lefebvre had several children and these descendants have added much to our community. The original 1884 homestead of Ferdinand and Zerilla Lefebvre, located at the northwest corner of Parrish Avenue (CSAH 42) and 85th Street, is familiar to many residents of Otsego today as the location of a round barn.

About 1915, Ferdinand Lefebvre had the round barn built by his sons, Johnny, Joe, and Noel, with the help of carpenters from Dayton. Most of the wood used in the construction of the round barn is roughhewn tamarack built upon an outer rock wall foundation that is two feet thick, made with rock taken from Joe Lefebvre's land near the current Nashua Avenue and 85th Street intersection. The center column supporting the roof is almost 50 feet in height and it looks like an opened umbrella inside of the hay mow. The roof was replaced in the late 1960s or early 1970s. The round barn was originally painted red but it was later refurbished with white metal siding and metal roofing. These modifications ended its opportunity to be recognized as a registered historical building.

The farm was a dairy until the 1940's with milk hauled to The Elk River Creamery. In the 1920's and 1930's it was hauled by both horse and wagon and trucks; in the 1940's it was solely by truck. This farm was the original home of Noel Lefebvre & Sons Trucking which branched into the current day LeFebvre Companies and Randy Lefebvre Milk Hauling. Eddie Lefebvre, a son of Noel Lefebvre, explained that the shape of the round barn was very efficient for tending cattle. Hay stored in the hay mow would be thrown through a door in the floor down to cattle in 23 stanchions (along with 4 horse stalls), whose heads were facing the middle of the building. Manure would be shoveled from the gutter behind the cows into a manure trolley (hanging from a steel track) which moved inside the barn to the outside. It was then loaded into the manure spreader, taken to fields and spread as fertilizer.

Noel Lefebvre lived on the farm from 1925 until 1976. He and his wife Mary (nee Holland) had six children. Their youngest son John Lefebvre (Ferdinand and Zerilla Lefebvre's grandson) continued to farm the original property after his father died; John never married or had children. When John Lefebvre died in 1997, his brother Eddie Lefebvre's son Kevin and his wife Benita moved to the property as the fourth generation of the family to live at the farmstead with the round barn now in their care. Kevin and Benita Lefebvre have sold portions of the original property for development. The Stonegate Estates neighborhood south of 85th Street, which was developed in 2000, was originally part of their farm. The City of Otsego acquired land at the southwest corner of the homestead in 2007 as a possible fire station location. More recently, Kevin and Benita have sold land for new residential dwellings and commercial lots as part of the Parrish Meadows plat approved in 2021.



The Round Barn (2022)
Credit: John Waldron



Sources:

- Kevin Lefebvre
- Otsego Heritage Preservation Commission
- Elk River Star News, "The Round Barn" by Joni Astrup, May 2010
- US Censuses from the years 1920, 1930, 1940

