

# THE CENTER PIECE



Brandon History Center, 105 Holmes Avenue, P. O. Box 514, Brandon, MN 56315  
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## Brandon Fire Department 125 Years of Service

In 1889, residents and businessmen established the Brandon Fire department. The original officers were Jacob Tamble, Berndt Tronbol, Prosper Seidlinger, Dr. Van Cappelan, and O. F. Olson, Fire Chief.

Over the years, equipment for fighting fires evolved from horse-drawn water wagons to their first International Fire Truck; a 1928 International; a 1949 Ford truck which was completely equipped with hose, ladders, chemical extinguishers, a booster pump and gas masks at a cost of \$5,070 which was raised after 10 years and 200 dances; a 1956 Pirsch truck which pumped 750 gallons of water per minute, fondly called "Old Number 4"; a new John Bean truck purchased in 1968 at a cost of \$15,000 that featured original high pressure fog and used

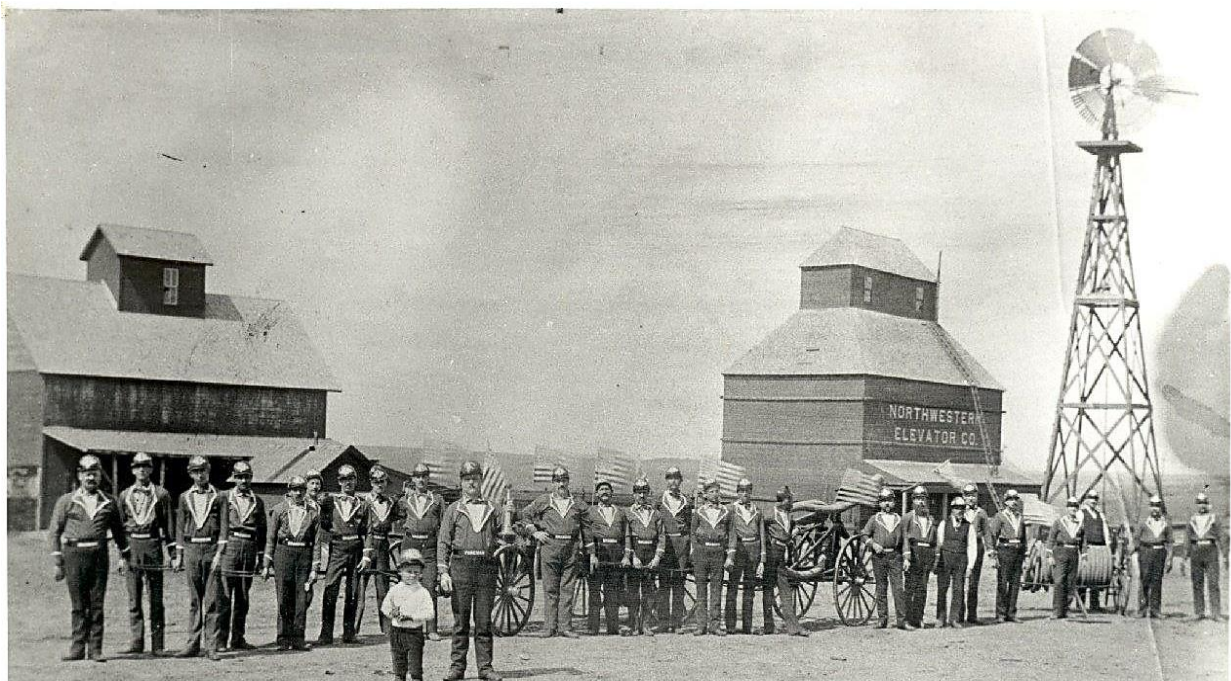
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a limited amount of water; a grass rig; equipment van; and their current fleet of up-to-date fire-fighting and rescue equipment.

The Brandon Fire Department will be honored at a community appreciation celebration on Friday, July 11, 2014, at 7 p.m., at the Brandon Auditorium. The program will include historical and present day videos of the department. Everyone welcome!

Pictured below are the original members of the Brandon Fire Department; and on page 2, current members of the Fire Department are pictured.



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## 2014 Brandon Fire Fighters

The Brandon Fire Department currently serves the City of Brandon, Brandon Township, and portions of Moe and Urness Townships. They are responsible for protecting properties valued at over \$100 million dollars.

Our volunteer fire fighters are well trained in extinguishing structure fires, reviving patients using CPR, extricating persons trapped in their vehicles, and saving lives. They say that their main benefits as firefighters are the satisfaction, camaraderie, and experience received from being a part of the fire and rescue service.

Firefighters and first responders need courage, dedication, a caring spirit, assertiveness, and, above all, a desire to help others in need. Firefighters and first responders perform

strenuous work that tests their abilities in uncertain and often hazardous situations. When the fire siren is heard, our prayers and support go with these brave people who rush to someone's aid.

Men and women, age 18 and older, who live or work within the Brandon Fire District, who are in good physical condition, and who have the desire to serve as firefighters and first responders are eligible for membership.

The Brandon community is proud of our volunteer fire fighters and first responders. Congratulations on your 125<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Please join us at the Brandon Auditorium on Friday, July 11, to celebrate with them.



## Church Cemetery History

### Church of Seven Dolors



Maintaining cemetery records is a mammoth job, as Florence Bitzan and Linda Wagner discovered as they tackled the task for the Church of Seven Dolors Cemetery in Millerville. However, in doing this, they found some very interesting history among the gravestones and the existing records.

Millerville's first church was constructed of logs harvested from the homestead of John Hockert, later known as Brooks farm. Sawed boards, nails, shingles, and windows were hauled from St. Cloud by ox teams. All construction was done by the parishioners in their spare time, after tedious hours spent on clearing their own land and planting their crops. Construction was completed by August 14, 1868, with Father Pierz conducting the first Mass on August 15, 1868.

The church was built on 20 acres donated by the mother of John A. Miller; the mother of Johann

Lorsung also donated 20 acres east of the church, which was intended to assist in the support of the church.

The Seven Dolors Cemetery is divided into three sections, with the oldest section being closest to the church. Each burial plot is numbered in each section, so graves are quite easy to find.

As Florence and Linda were going through the cemetery book and old tombstones, history of local residents began to emerge. It appears that the first person to be buried there was Apolonia Zeimantz, who died at the age of 44 on August 14, 1869.

Anna Hockert, daughter of John and Elizabeth (Schuster) Boesen and wife of Nicholas Hockert, Sr., died at the age of 36 on September 14, 1869. Linus Wilm was buried in 1870. The first name

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entered in the interment book was Barbara Blates; however, her tombstone was not located.

Burial records revealed that some families suffered through the loss of their children. In April 1899 the Nick and Carolina Hockert family lost four children to diphtheria. The children ranged in age from seven months to seven years, all dying within ten days of each other. Also Joe and Frances Revering had several children who were stillborn due to a blood disorder.

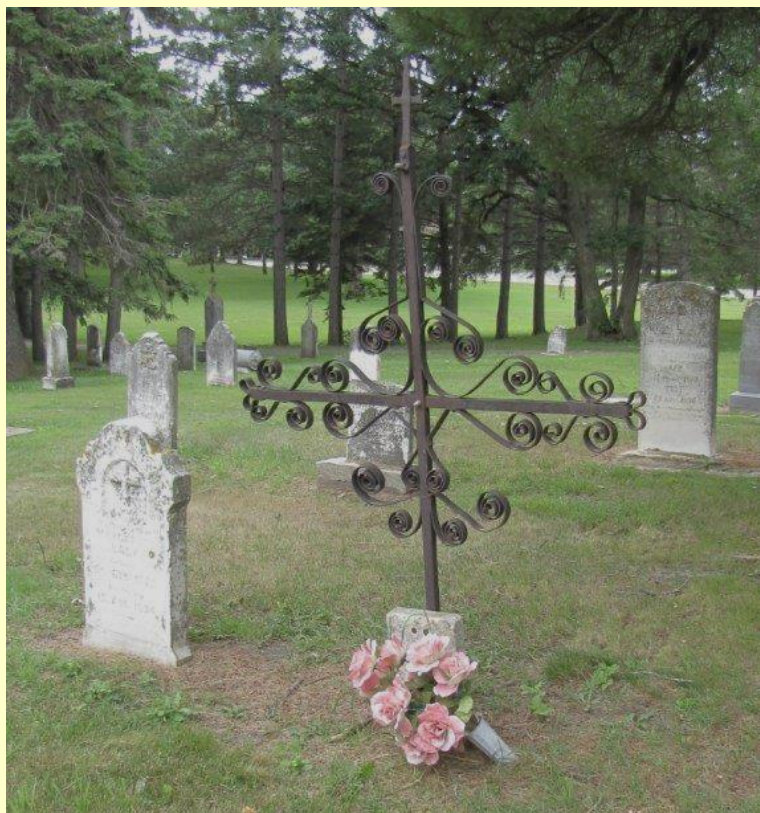
Tombstones were difficult to read due to age and because some of the wording was in German. Linda and Florence were able to give a location number for 868 tombstones. Even though the interment book has 1202 names listed, many of these graves had no markers, especially in the oldest section.

A book was prepared by these ladies listing each name in alphabetic order, with each burial plot having a Section-Row-Number. Also listed are birth/death dates, parents, spouses, and causes of death. The book is updated every year. Copies can be found at the Parish Office, Brandon History Center, and the Douglas County Historical Society.

In order to preserve history, it is critical to maintain cemetery records since quite often relatives drive miles to visit cemeteries in order to research their ancestors. With a reference book that ties into the tombstones in the cemetery such as the Seven Dolors Cemetery now has, it will be much easier to fill in missing historical information.

We give a hearty "Thank you!" to Linda and Florence for their hard work which began in 2010 and their diligence in tackling this huge project.

**Quote from the Baden family:** *"We traveled 455 miles to Millerville, Minnesota, and found our great grandmother's grave."*



This beautiful iron scroll work cross is found on the grave of Gertrude Gorgen Baden, who is buried at the Seven Dolors Cemetery in Millerville. Gertrude died during childbirth in 1886. Her husband, Mathias Baden, made this in memory of his wife and installed on her grave site. It is beautiful and well-preserved and done by a master craftsman.

Mathias Baden was born in Trierweeler, Trier-Saarburg, Rhineland Pfalz, Germany. He settled in Millerville where he owned and operated a blacksmith and harness shop, which he later sold to Matt Kotchevar. A local resident Louis Klein was an apprentice at the blacksmith and was Mathias' brother-in-law. After remarrying, Mathias moved to Lake Elmo, MN.

This piece of history was provided to us by Debra Baden Drange and Diane Ayers, great granddaughters of Mathias Baden. We are grateful for their help in identifying this beautiful iron work.





**The Brandon Community Club** has been in existence since 1934, operating under the name of the Brandon Commercial Club until September of 1989.

The Community Club organizes many community activities, including Summerfest events: pork chop feed at Lions Park with live music, Miss Tootsie Pageant (every 3 years), craft show/quilt display, petting zoo, fingerprinting by Douglas County Sheriff, Kiddie Parade, Grand Parade, collection for County Food Shelf, children/adult tractor pulls, and concession stand at the street dance. Service clubs in Brandon assist with coordinating and advertising. (4-H Achievement Day, dances, barbecues, and Crazy Days were sponsored in the past. Great memories!)

Other events currently coordinated by the Community Club are: "Where's Wilbur" Hunt during Snowball week; Easter Egg Hunt/party for area children; city-wide garage sales; Adopt-a-Pole for fall decorating; pep rally for football/volleyball players and fans; Halloween party for area children; December coffee days; and Santa Day.

Have you noticed the two new benches located on Main Street, the new "Brandon" signs on the 5 roads leading into Brandon, the refurbished Christmas

decorations and the newly purchased sound system used at Summerfest Parades and the Pep Rally? These are additional projects taken on by your club.

Club memberships have declined over the years, from the original 40 members to currently averaging 6 to 8 members. The club needs and invites new members to help with events and to bring in fresh ideas. There are no dues or membership fees. As you can see, these few members do a tremendous amount of work. The next time you see any of the members, give them a big "Thank you!" for all of their hard work in keeping our community a fun place in which to work and play and to maintain community pride in our corner of the state of Minnesota.

Meetings are scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month at Moe-Urness-Lund Insurance at 4:15 p.m. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Current members are: Ruth Plaster, Karen Thoennes, Marcia Bolin (**Front Row**); and Lisa Hynes, Susan Kelly, Cinnamon Plaster, Karen Lund, and Kevin Challes (**Back Row**). Not pictured: Lana Suchy and Kim Dingwall.

# Book Signing

*Legends  
of the  
Hills*



Author  
**Gabe Pipo**



A story of one of the earliest pioneers in the hills of Moe Township, Douglas County, Minnesota. His journey to America, a journey that took six to eight years. How he and his neighbors survived and some of the adventures and misfortunes they endured. How they lived and built a future in the wilderness. How the community in the Township was formed and included civic organizations, churches, schools and local government accomplishments.

**During Brandon Summerfest  
Brandon History Center  
Saturday, August 2nd 1 P.M. - 2 P.M.**

For more information call:  
Chris Korkowski 320-834-4505 or Janet Nelson 320-834-4401

## Resident Authors and Artists Are Important Part of Our Local History

Local history is never complete without showcasing the talents of resident authors and artists. This year Gabe Pipo will be signing his book, **Legends of the Hills**, at the History Center on Saturday, August 2. His book tells the story of people who immigrated to Moe Township—their adventures and hardships. Join us at the History Center for a chat with Gabe. Books will be available for purchase.

## From the Past: Moe Town Hall Stage Curtain Donated to History Center



This very unique stage curtain dates back to sometime in the 1940s. The Moe Town Board donated this to the History Center. It will be on display in the Brandon Auditorium during Summerfest this year, and then it will be placed in storage to preserve it until we display it again during future special events. Eighteen Brandon businesses, plus seven other area businesses, are advertised on the curtain. Most of the businesses are no longer in operation.

### Thank You . . .

Thank you to John and Cindy Korkowski Haffner for donating \$100 to the History Center.

Thank you to Myron and Carol Severson, Janet and Bruce Nelson, and Joan Fjoslien for their donations in memory of Cliff Strom.

Kevin Challes donated a hand-painted picture done by local artist Bob Thompson. Bob was very talented in wood carving and painting. He spent much of his time after retirement carving very unique items using very unique pieces of wood. Graduates from our Brandon Public School remember Bob coming to art class and demonstrating his talents. Thank you, Kevin, for donating this painting to the History Center.

### Memberships

As our readers know, the History Center relies on memberships and grants to fund our operations and projects.

Annual memberships are \$10 for individuals; \$15 for family. Single life memberships are \$150.

In addition to renewing your membership, you may want to consider making a charitable contribution of \$100 or more. Because we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, contributions are tax-deductible. Your gift will be recognized by name engraved on our contributor plaques which are on display in the History Center.

## **Brandon History Center**

105 Holmes Avenue, P. O. Box 514  
Brandon, MN 56315

**E-MAIL:** [brandonhistory@gctel.net](mailto:brandonhistory@gctel.net)

<http://brandonhistorycenter.blogspot.com>

### **BOARD MEMBERS:**

Hilda Bettermann  
Florence Bitzan  
Marcia Bolin  
Christella Korkowski  
Janet Nelson  
Ruth Plaster  
Karen Thoennes

*We're on the Web! Visit us at:*

**[www.brandonmn.com](http://www.brandonmn.com)**

## **Our Mission Statement**

To collect preserve and display articles, pictures, and memorabilia from Brandon, Millerville, and the surrounding area for future generations.

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