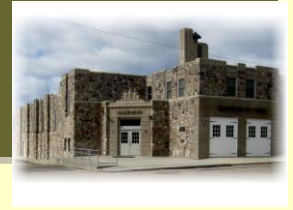


THE CENTER PIECE



Brandon History Center, 105 Holmes Avenue, P. O. Box 514, Brandon, MN 56315
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The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round . . .

Bus transportation for our public school students has been in existence since the late 1800s. Research shows that the first school bus was called a kid hack, a carriage powered by either horses or mules. It usually loaded at the rear to avoid frightening the animals. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, most elementary children in rural areas attended one-room schools. A typical kid hack would serve all the farms in the area of the school and usually transported less than 20 children.

The horse-drawn kid hack is considered to be the forerunner of the modern yellow school bus. As early as 1914, versions of kid hacks were attached to early motor vehicles. As motorized trucks became more commonplace in rural areas, detachable wooden kid hack bodies were made which could be removed when the truck was used



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for another purpose. Around 1927, much heavier all-steel bodies were introduced. Permanently mounted on the truck chassis, the combined vehicle became known as a school bus.

The earliest school bus we could find for Brandon Public Schools was the “cracker box” bus, pictured below right, which was driven by Henry Handke. Pictured below left is a Millerville School Bus, (1944) which is similar to the Brandon “cracker box.” Leo Hopfner was the only driver of record of this bus.



And the Wheels Keep Turning

The Brandon Town School was organized in 1869 as School District 31, which later became District 207. Students from the Millerville area were transported to attend high school in Brandon.

The bus pictured directly below was probably used to transport rural children to St. Mary's School in Millerville. William Van Sickle was the driver of the Brandon North Bus pictured below.



Picture taken next to the Nick & Margaret Miller store and home.

The Grocery Store was built in 1940.

Car is a 1938 Chevy Bus is a 1937 International



The Wipers on the Bus . . .



Pictured above is owner/operator Ted Plaster kneeling in front of students he transported in the 1940s to and from Brandon Public School. The old school building is pictured in the background.

At one time, there were 104 school districts in Douglas County. The school districts were numbered in the order they were created. Osakis was the first school district and Alexandria the second in Douglas County. (Districts 1 and 2) In June of 1971, all rural districts were absorbed into school systems offering kindergarten through grade 12.

After country schools consolidated with town schools, the need for rural transportation of students grew to several buses for each consolidated district. This was true for Brandon.

Cliff Strom owned and operated the bus fleet for the Brandon School district for a number of years before selling it to his brother, Ray Strom. Then the bus fleet was sold to Bruce Nelson in the fall of 1968. Later Bruce Nelson sold the buses to his

daughter Mary Pohlmann, who is the current owner/operator.

Included here is a compilation of bus drivers we are aware of who transported students to and from Brandon Public Schools: Henry Handke, Leo Hopfner, William Van Sickle, Ted Plaster, Cliff Strom, Ray Strom, Ardell Hendrickson, Al Roers, Cliff Augdahl, Charles Rossum, Dayton Hermanson, Jim Anderson, Gordon Julseth, Ervin Grubb, Nathan Tollifson, Orvin Schjei, Kenneth Schjei, Everett Olson, Karen Schjei, Chris Arndt, Bill Koetter, Don Taylor, Bruce Nelson, Dennis Anderson, Dale Hartle, John Plaster, Jean Slack, Alois Schecher, Mel Vensland, George Slack, John Pennie, Sharon Wagner, Paul Christiansen, Greg Wales, Chuck Schmidt, Judy Nelson, Janet Nelson, Mary Pohlmann, R. Briss, R. Olson, Mark Kelly, Marvin Wagner.

Buses and Owners Keep Changing



One of the buses owned by Cliff Strom
Charles Rossum, Driver



Bruce Nelson Bus Service



Change in style - Ray Strom Bus

In 1915 the legislature passed laws providing for reimbursement aid for transportation. The aid, which went to consolidated districts, was originally limited to \$2,000 per year per district. Eventually reimbursement included other districts as well.

Qualifications, instruction, and background checks were developed for drivers. School bus inspections were put in place and safety features added to buses

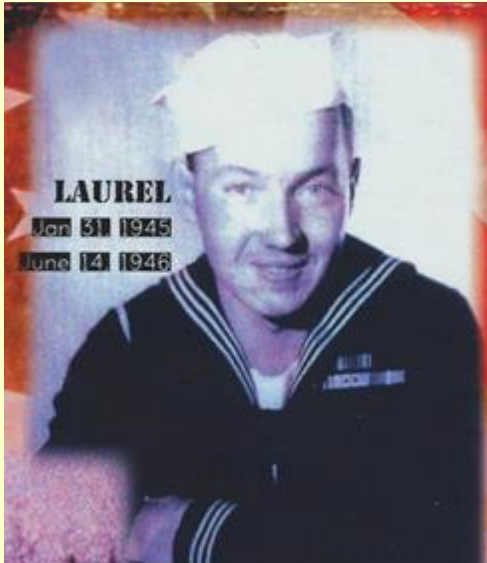


Mary Pohlmann - current

to protect children, such as flashing lights, crossing control arms, special mirrors, etc.

School transportation companies and drivers take their jobs very seriously because they are responsible for precious cargo on their buses. Thank your school transportation provider and their drivers, past and present, for a job well done! Thank you, Mary Pohlmann and your predecessors!!

Veterans' Corner . . .



Laurel Joyce Johnson

Laurel Johnson was born on August 19, 1921, to John and Marion Johnson in rural Brandon, MN. He graduated from country school district #32 in 1935, then completed one year at Brandon High School. In 1936, Laurel attended WCSA School in Morris, graduating in 1938.

Laurel was inducted into the United States Navy in 1945 and served on the Battleship Wisconsin in the Pacific Theater. He received an honorable discharge in 1946. Laurel passed away on December 12, 2015, and was buried at Lands Cemetery, rural Hoffman, MN.



Ralph Leo Olson

Ralph Leo Olson was born June 5, 1933 in LaGrand Township. He was inducted into the United States Army on May 22, 1953, in Minneapolis MN. Ralph trained in Fort Lewis, Washington, Company K-23rd Inf. Reg. T APO 248. He was stationed overseas, in combat for one year, five months, and sixteen days. He reached the rank of Sergeant (T) on August 16, 1954. Ralph received the National Defense Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, and the Korean Service Medal. His name is also on the Viet Nam Veterans' Memorial Wall in Washington D.C., for being an Honorary Korean War Veteran. Ralph was honorably discharged April 25, 1955.

Ralph Passed away December 31, 2015, and was buried at the Minnesota State Veteran's Cemetery, at Camp Ripley, near Little Falls, MN.



Lloyd Aloysius Lehn

Lloyd Lehn was born on November 8, 1921, in Brandon, Minnesota, the son of John and Susan (Tamble) Lehn. He enlisted in the United States Navy in 1941 and served overseas during World War II. Lloyd was honorably discharged in May of 1946, having earned the rank of Lieutenant.

Lloyd passed away January 31, 2016. He is buried at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Willmar, Minnesota.

Brandon History Center

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Janet Nelson

Ruth Plaster

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We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.brandonmn.com

Thank you . . .

- \$25 donation from Edith Korkowski Neeson.
- \$20 donation from Hilda Bettermann in memory of Joyce Botner.
- Donation of three annuals and an old baseball score book from Elphege Webskowski.

Note: We are still looking for 1965 and 1987 Brandon annuals and from 1989 forward.

Our Mission Statement

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