

The Center Piece

Summer 2023

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Early History of Fort Chippewa and Brandon



The land on which the buildings stood was sold by Freudenrich to a Richard Pfeiffer, who in turn sold it to Elias Lund. The property is still in the Lund family. It is now the home of the Dennis Lund family, a grandson of Elias.

The first piece of land taken up in Brandon Township was by Henry Gager at about the time stage route was opened between St. Cloud and Fort Abercrombie which was located near the city of Breckenridge on the North Dakota border. Burbank and Waite, who had the mail contract, induced Gager to open up a stage station and trading post for them. Gager operated this station until 1862 when an Indian outbreak drove him out. In time a stockade was put up at Chippewa and settlers began moving back to the area. Gager named the post Chippewa after the two lakes with the same name, from which the Chippewa River flows southward.

A man named Freudenrich bought the stage station from Gager in 1865. By 1866 there was a hotel which was owned by Freudenrich and a store owned by a Mr. Miller and a Mr. Metz. There was also a blacksmith shop and barns for the animals of the stage lines, i.e. horses, mules and oxen. Chippewa also had a post office, and a fort that was in service from 1862-1866. At times as many as 25 to 30 soldiers were stationed there. Ox trains going through the area sold flour and other supplies to the soldiers.

A short distance north of the Lund building site at a fork in the road is the Fort Chippewa Cemetery, now overgrown with trees and brush. The body of a Civil War veteran, John C. Blatt, was exhumed and reburied in the Brandon Community Cemetery.

In the year 1879, the railroad was laid out two miles south of Chippewa. The town was re-settled nearer the railroad and given the name of Brandon. It was named for Brandon, Vermont, the birthplace of Stephen A. Douglas, for whom the county was named. The proprietress of the new site was Mary Griffin, who business manager was J. W. Griffin of Minneapolis. Martin Stowe built a large store building and residence on the prairie, soon to be followed by Halvor Engemoen of Holmes City who also built a large store and residence. Emil Larson built a hotel, Pillsbury, Hulbert and David Dows and Co. erected grain houses. Other business interests soon followed.

The village became incorporated by a bill passed by the State Legislature, and signed by the Governor on November 22, 1881. About 1890 a Town Hall was built as a public meeting place and headquarters for the Brandon Fire Department.

Reprinted from Brandon Centennial Book, 1881-1981

Veteran's Corner



**Elphege
David
Webskowski**

**United States
Army**

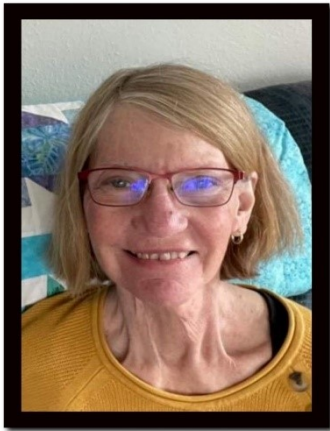
**Korean War
Era**

Elphege David Webskowski was drafted into the US Army on February 12, 1953. He received his basic training at Camp Gordon, Georgia. Later Elphege received six months of Signal Corps training at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. He served out of Bremerhaven, Germany. He removed and installed communications wires to tower sites in many countries of Europe. The Korean war ended on July 27, 1953.

Elphege was honorably discharged from the United States Army at Fort Sheridan Illinois February 2, 1955.

*Elphege David Webskowski passed away
April 12, 2023.*

*He was laid to rest at St. Ann's Catholic Cemetery
in Brandon Minnesota on April 18, 2023.*



**Airman First
Class (A1C)**

**Maxine
Sammons**

**United States Air
Force**

**Vietnam Conflict
Era**

Maxine Sammons enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1972. She was stationed at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi and other bases in that area. She was trained in the medical field. She received her honorable discharge in 1976.

Maxine passed away on November 13, 2022

*She received Military Honors at her funeral
December 2, 2022*

at St. Ann's Catholic Church, Brandon MN

The interment will be held at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Little Falls, Minnesota at a later date.



**Corporal Verne
Robert Challes
United States
Marine**

Korean War ERA

Vernon Challes was drafted into the United States Marine Corps in 1952. During his time in the Marine Corps Vernon trained in telephone repair. Vernon was honorably discharged from the service in 1954 after serving two years in the service of his country.

*Vernon passed away on Monday April 10, 2023 at
the Veteran Administration Medical Center in St. Cloud.*

*He received a Military Burial Service at
Camp Ripley Cemetery in Little Falls
on April 18, 2023.*



Hilda Bettermann, long time Brandon History Center member and former board member, died recently on Jan. 28, 2023. We thank her for her dedication to the History Center.

The following is some excerpts from her obituary.

On Oct 22, 1942 Amanda Hilda Christine Haabala was born to Alexander Mathias

Haabala and Hilda Emelia Haabala (Lander); she was the middle of three children. She grew up on their family farm south of Brandon, MN in a Finnish community. She attended country school for 4 years and graduated from Brandon High School in 1960 as Valedictorian of her class. She married Will Bettermann in 1962. After the birth of their first daughter, they decided to move back to the Brandon area and purchased a 70-acre farm where they raised corps, vegetables, and milked cows. After selling their farm they moved near Big Chippewa Lake.

She began teaching classes at Alexandria Technical and Community College and ended her career at ATCC as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. In 1990, Hilda ran for the Minnesota House of Representatives and served 4 terms from 1991-1998. She was Assistant House Minority Leader for 6 of those years. She also served on the State Board of Medical Practice, Campaign Finance and Ethics Board, Douglas County Hospital Board, and the Brandon History Center Board.

The Brandon History Center will be open on Aug 5. Plan to stop by and visit. The museum will be open and we will be playing the Brandon Auditorium video.

Newsletter Articles Wanted

We are always looking for articles of interest on local history or local family history. If you would like to submit an article for this newsletter, please e-mail it to brandonhistory@gctel.net

Thank you!

To everyone who requested research on family members, other Brandon/Millerville research, or other, items, we are glad help. Thank you to all who have donated money, items for our history collections, and information about people of the area for our family files.

Membership Information

Annual Memberships are \$10 for individuals, \$15 for family. Life time memberships are \$150 for individuals and \$200 for family. Membership dues are waived for board members and volunteers who volunteer at least 10 hours a year.

In addition to renewing your membership, you may want to consider a tax deductible charitable contribution of \$100 more to the History Center. The Brandon History center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

With a \$100 donation, the donation is remembered on the wall plaque with either your own name or in memory of a family member or friend.

History Center Hours

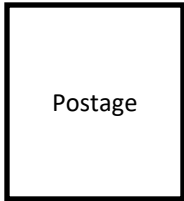
The History Center hours are by appointment. It is open for research or to donate items of historical value such as family pictures and stories. Email brandonhistory@gctel.net to arrange a time for a visit or to drop off your items.

The History Center is usually open Friday mornings from 9 to noon, but since it is staffed by volunteers, you may want to verify before planning a visit by emailing brandonhistory@gctel.com.



Brandon Meat Market, circa 1890

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



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Email: brandonhistory@gctel.net
Website: www.BrandonHistoryCenter.org
Blog: <http://brandonhistorycenter.blogspot.com>
Facebook: Brandon History Center

BOARD MEMBERS:

Florence Bitzan
Carol Ramler
Mike Cleary
Ruth Plaster
Cheryl Johnson
Karen Thoennes
Dennis Korkowski

Our Mission Statement

To collect and preserve the history of Brandon, Millerville, and the surrounding area for future generations.

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

Trivia

From the Douglas Country Trivia game published by the Douglas County Historical Society 1986

1. Who was the president of the Brandon State Bank when organized in 1902?
2. What insect destroyed many farm crops in the 1930's?
3. Douglas County, according to U.S. Government surveys has an area of 452,500.62 acres. How much of that is water?

1. O.F. Olson — 2. Grasshoppers — 3. 1/7 part with 264 classified lakes