

# THE CENTER PIECE



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## Third Annual Meeting of BHC

The Brandon History Center held its third annual meeting on Monday, October 10, 2011, at 7 p.m. at the History Center office. Eleven members were in attendance.

Upon approval of the minutes of the 2010 annual meeting and the current financial report, board members reported on areas of responsibility regarding the newsletter; collecting of Millerville history; status of veteran displays; progress of display, storage, and archiving of artifacts, memorabilia, and documents. President Christella Korkowski reported on activities and projects since the last annual meeting.

Phase II of the auditorium restoration is nearly completed and was fully funded by grants and fundraising efforts.

February 17, 2012, has been set as the date for the annual Chili Cook-off, the proceeds of which will be used toward Phase III of the auditorium restoration project.

Duane Hanson will construct a display stand for the Standard Oil Crown globe donated by Don Bitzan.

Gary Lund and Jim Eichelberger were winners of the door prize drawings. Pictured at right is Gary Lund.

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#### Did you know?

The Minnesota Historical Society lists 355 local historical societies for our state on their website.

#### Did you know?

There are five known historical societies in Douglas County.



*Hill Top Lumber*

## From the Past – Brandon Lumber Company



Picture from  
Brandon Echo  
Edition dated May  
28, 1903.

The Lumber yard  
was located on the  
current site of  
Hilltop Lumber.

See related story  
below.

Who was C. A. Smith, the man who originally established the Brandon Lumber Company?

According to rootsweb.ancestry.com, C. A. Smith, a Swedish immigrant, was employed by former Minnesota governor, John Pillsbury, until 1878 in Mr. Pillsbury's hardware store. Gov. Pillsbury helped Smith start an elevator, implement store, and lumber business in Herman, Minnesota, a new community along the Great Northern Railway line. Smith conducted that business enterprise under the name of C. A. Smith & Co., with Gov. Pillsbury as equal partner. In addition to the Herman venture, Smith opened retail lumber yards at Evansville, Brandon, and Ashby. He continued in the lumber business for the rest of his life, serving on national and regional lumber association boards. He served on the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota and was a well-known philanthropist in the Minneapolis area.

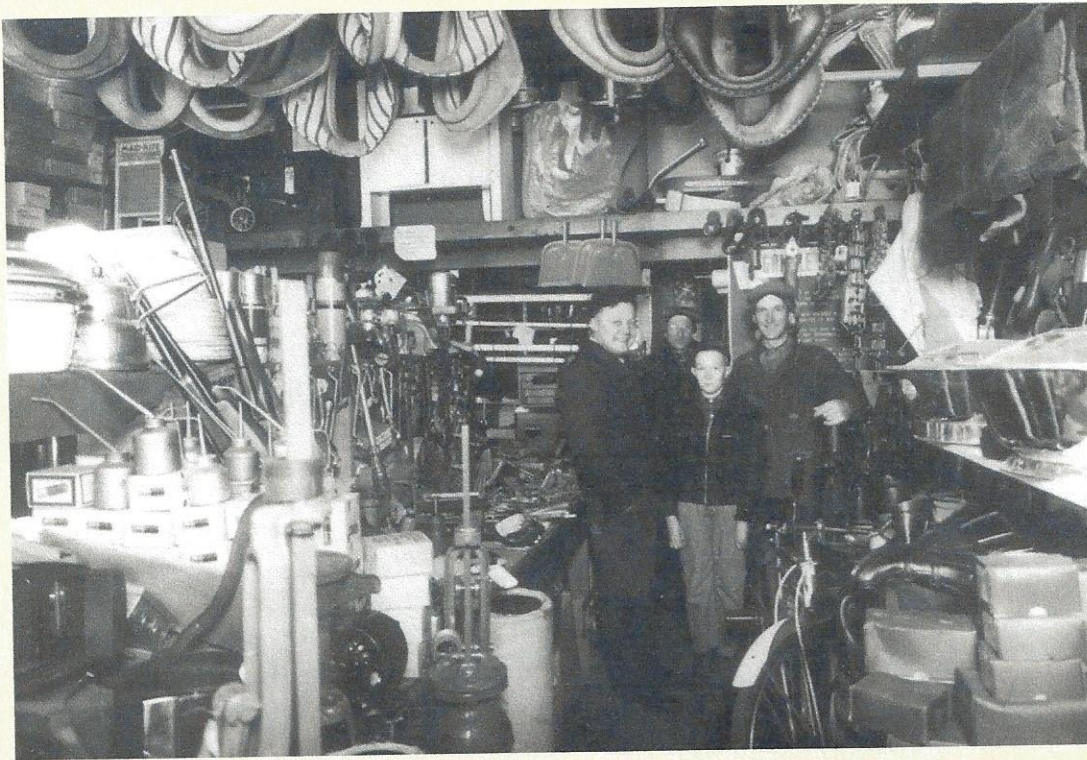
Charles Rosengren worked for Smith and operated the Brandon Lumber until he moved out of the area. His brother, Oscar, then took over management until he retired in 1932.

Otto Johnson and son, Winston, operated the business until Otto's death in 1941. After serving in World War II, Winston returned to run the lumber yard. Winston constructed a new building on the same site in 1950, building the office portion first and later adding a warehouse. Winston retired from the business in 1984. Lumber and related supplies can still be purchased at the original site at Klimek's Hill Top Lumber which is pictured below.





## From the Past – K. P. Joos Hardware Store



Interior of  
K. P. Joos  
Hardware  
Store in  
Millerville  
(1920s)

Left to right:  
Karl Joos,  
Nick Klimek,  
Bernard  
Klimek, and  
Engebert  
Gluba.

In 1922, Karl P. Joos, son of Fredrick and Mary Joos, opened his harness and leather-related shop in a newly constructed building on property given to him by his father, who had originally purchased it from Edward Schirber.

Karl had taken a course in harness making and leather sewing from a Joseph Seifert of Lamberton, Minnesota. To increase production and create a better product, he purchased his first Singer sewing machine in 1925. Later he added men's and boys' shoes and a line of groceries supplied by Ludke's to his inventory.

As the tractor replaced the horse, Karl added a line of hardware and a gas pump.

Karl's expertise and craftsmanship were known outside of the Millerville area as he advertised his leather-made goods, including his dog whips and pole-climbing safety belts, in a magazine.

He continued his career in leather and canvas work in the original location until his death in 1977. K. P. Joos Hardware was located at the current J. B. Tractor location in Millerville.

Information for this article was provided by local residents and from Helen Joos Cichy's book, Our Founder's Legacy, which is an important resource on Millerville history. Helen was a sister of Karl (K. P.) Joos.



## VETERANS' CORNER – Harold S. Hanson



Harold S. Hanson - World War I Veteran

Harold Hanson, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Hanson of Brandon was inducted into the United States Army on October 23, 1918. He was stationed at Camp Forrest, Georgia, and was honorably discharged on December 24, 1918, at the end of the war.

Harold was a member of the Brandon Legion Post, evidenced by membership cards for each year he was a member. A folder containing all of Harold's membership cards is on file at the History Center.

Leila Hanson is pictured above right presenting the military uniform and overcoat of her brother-in-law Harold to the Brandon History Center for preservation and display.



Thank you, Leila and Hanson family!



Thank you to Florence Greenquist, pictured above, who presented her husband Bud's military uniform for preservation and display. Bud's military history can be found in a prior issue of The Center Piece.



## Thank You – –

Thank you to all who have made recent donations of cash and other items to the History Center.

### Recent cash donations include:

Florence Greenquist – \$50  
 Class of 1947 – \$40  
 In memory of Kenny Schjei – \$25

### Auditorium Restoration project:

Brandon Fin & Feather Club – \$500

### Other donations:

Brandon Bremer Bank – Filing Cabinets  
 Jim Pischke – Millerville baseball shirt & picture  
 Wayne Hermanson family – military dog tags & medals

The History Center could not exist without the generosity of our benefactors!

## Auditorium Sculpture Mystery



The stone sculpture above the Auditorium door is a little bit of a mystery. The best information we can come up with is that the building was intended for basketball games and band concerts. The young man on the left has a basketball by his left hand. The young man on the right has a trumpet by his right hand. **Any other ideas?**

## Muriel – Book Signing at BHC

Something special took place during the Brandon Summerfest this year. Joanna Engstrom, author of the biography, Muriel, came to the Brandon History Center for a book signing event on August 6. Muriel Olson Kappler, about whom the book is written, was also present. We give special thanks to Joanna and Muriel for providing a great event for us.

Muriel grew up in the Brandon area; and upon finishing her nurse's training in Minneapolis, enlisted in the U. S. Army. The book contains memories of Muriel's childhood and local people, places, and events. The important role her mother played in her life is evident throughout the book. Her memories include her special relationship with her sister and her sister's children.

The book describes her experiences in the realities and tragedies of war. She served near the front lines in World War II at Utah Beach and in Germany. Muriel took her love of Brandon all the way to the war in Europe and back. Muriel is pictured below.



Copies of Muriel's biography are available for purchase by contacting Kathlyn Mohagen.



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**BOARD MEMBERS:**

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

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

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

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CENTER**  
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## 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

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Because we are 501(c)(3) non-profit, contributions are tax-deductible.

Consider making a contribution of \$100 or more. Your gift will be recognized by name on our contributor plaques. Also make use of our three membership options: Individual or family one-year or single life memberships.

