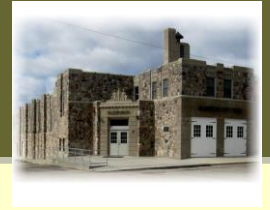


# THE CENTER PIECE



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## Winters from the Past

Did you ever wonder what folks did in Brandon’s early days during the winter? How did they handle snow? What were their winter activities? Let’s take a look.

Pictured below is mail carrier, Henry Johnson, driving his homemade snowmobile for delivering mail. “Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds,” says an inscription on the General Post Office in New York City. Henry’s creativity made life easier for him in getting the mail delivered during snowy winters. Let’s give him credit for inventing the snowmobile—at least this one.

Pictured below right is John Hammergren’s team of horses that pulled his snowplow during the winter. John served on the Brandon Fire Department for 39 years and as Fire Chief in 1914. He and his family lived across the street from the auditorium, the site of the current city garage. He was the father of Borghild Skrove.

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The top picture below shows some winter fun ski-jumping on George Skrove’s Hill east of Brandon. Northern Europeans who settled here knew how to handle snow and have fun in the winter.



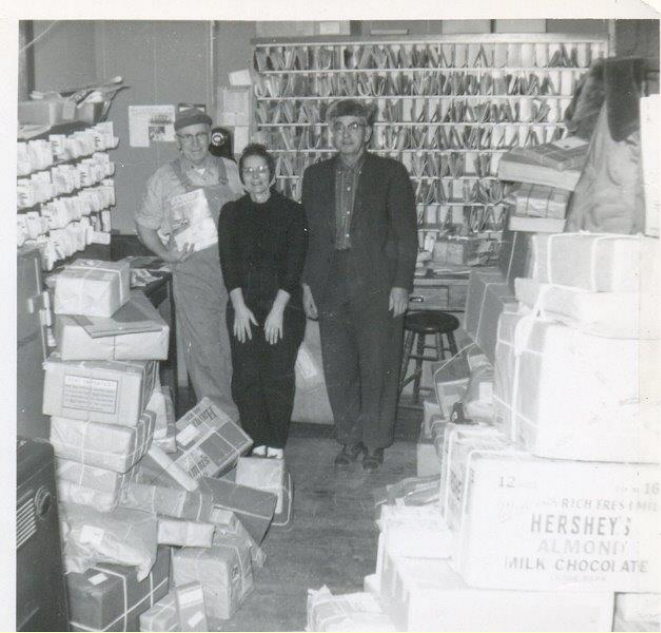
**Henry Johnson Snowmobile**



**Hammergren Dray Line**

*More on page 2*

## More Winter Scenes



Above: Ray Lanners, Delores Schwartz, and Brandon Postmaster Walt Hoving surrounded by the big Christmas mail rush in the current post office building.



Men clearing the railroad tracks near Brandon after the Armistice Day storm in 1940.



Brandon Front Street looking West to East  
February 22, 1910

## Armistice Day 1940 Storm

The Armistice Day storm of 1940 covered a 1,000-mile-wide area through the middle of the United States.

Unseasonably high temperatures during the morning of November 11, warming temperatures in the 60s by early afternoon, and sharply falling temperatures later in the day brought heavy winds, rain, followed by sleet and snow. The result was a raging blizzard that would last into the next day. Snowfalls of up to 27 inches, winds of 50 to 80 mph, 20-foot snow drifts, and 50-degree temperature drops were common. Communications were crippled, which made rescue efforts almost impossible. The Armistice Day Blizzard ranks No. 2 in Minnesota's list of top-5 weather events of the 20th century.

Across the upper Midwest drifts up to 20 feet high buried cars, and rescuers had to force long probes into the rock hard drifts in their search for missing people. Passenger trains were stranded; roads and highways remained closed for days. Telephone and power lines were damaged as were homes, barns, and outbuildings in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Michigan.

## Joan Fjoslien – History Center Benefactor Laid to Rest

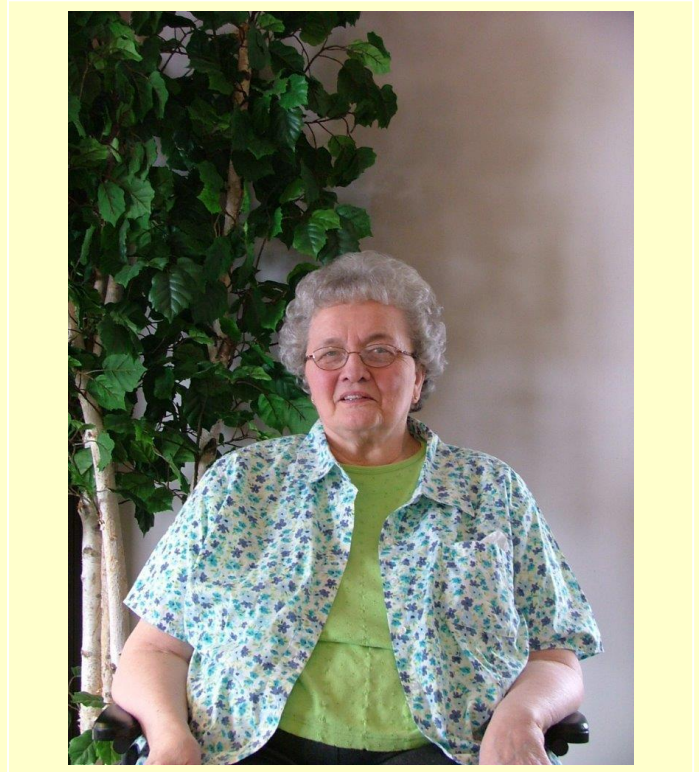
Joan Fjoslien was laid to rest on October 2, 2015, at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery in Little Falls, Minnesota. A memorial service was held on October 2, 2015, at the Bethany Home Chapel in Alexandria.

Joan was well known in the Brandon area, having lived and farmed there with her husband Dave. She was Dave's right hand person while he served in the Minnesota Legislature for 14 years. Where Dave couldn't be during those busy years, Joan was.

She was born on December 20, 1934, in Morris, MN, the daughter of Agnes and Peter Erdahl. After graduating from high school, she attended Moorhead State College where she received her degree in education. She taught elementary education in the Austin and Alexandria School Districts.

Joan was involved in and gave generously to many organizations with her time and donations, including her church, fishing organizations, food shelves, historical societies (including our local History Center), musical organizations, nursing homes, pet programs, Habitat for Humanity, educational organizations, and the Brandon Legion Auxiliary.

Joan was instrumental in funding the upgrade of the historical Brandon Auditorium which houses our History Center. She provided seed money for matching purposes. She was always there with her



encouragement, good nature, and gifts. We thank her for her generosity.

Joan was preceded in death by her husband Dave an infant brother, and her parents. She is survived by her sister-in-law Lucille Fjoslien and several cousins.

Our good friend, Joan, will be missed.

Pictured at left is the entrance area to the Little Falls Veterans Cemetery where Joan is buried with her husband Dave. Dave was instrumental in developing this cemetery for veterans during his tenure in the Minnesota Legislature. The cemetery opened in 1994 as a final resting place for Minnesota veterans.



## German–American State Bank



During the summer of 1914, the first bank in Millerville, founded by Tolef Jacobson, opened under the name of The German American State Bank. After our country entered World War I against Germany, the name was changed to the Millerville State Bank. Frank Buscher, a gentleman born in Millerville, was hired as cashier. F.G. Dobmeyer and P.B. Lorsung were given shares and directorships in the bank. The building and fixtures were valued at \$5,000.

According to a financial statement dated December 31, 1923, total deposits at the bank were \$137,005.98; and the capital stock was then listed as \$10,000. Officers at that time were Fred Swenson, President; John A. Nelson, Vice President; Frank Buscher, Cashier; J. A. Wedum, Director.

During the early 1920s, many banks failed around the country, with more than half failing in Douglas County. In 1926, the Millerville State Bank was said to be insolvent; and on December 1, 1926, a meeting was held for depositors. Those who had money deposited at the bank were required to sign an agreement for drawing out their money over a three-year period.

On July 18, 1927, another meeting of the bank's depositors was held. The contracts they signed in December were not honored. Folks tried to get

the remaining funds to Brandon and to organize a new bank there, but that attempt failed. The Millerville State Bank then went bankrupt and a State Administrator took over the remaining assets. It appears that the depositors received 60 percent of their money on deposit. The building was sold to J.J. Thoennes for \$1,350.

(The source of this piece of history is "The History of Millerville.")

On the average, more than 600 banks around the country failed each year between 1921 and 1929. Those failures led to the end of many state deposit insurance programs. Most failed banks were primarily small, rural banks.

## Veterans Corner . . .



**Greg Blankenship**

Greg enlisted in the United States Air Force in 1982 and attended basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. He also served at Scotts Air Force Base in Illinois; the Naval Air Station, Keflavik, Iceland; and Moody Air Force Base in Georgia. Greg was honorably discharged in 1986.

Greg passed away on August 6, 2015, at the age of 52 years.

## Thank you . . .



Thank you to John Roers for donating his Millerville baseball jacket to the History Center. The Millerville team won the 1958 Resorters' League championship as is shown on the patch on the left side of the jacket.

Thank you also to:

Sister Lucy Revering for the 1984 Douglas County Plat Book and Millerville Township map.

Mary and Dana Baker for many high school year books.

Norma Blankenship for church pictures.

Class of 1947 for \$45 donation.

Class of 1960 for \$125 donation.

Class of 1961 for \$124 donation.

Class of 1965 for \$260 donation.

Class of 1968 for \$100 donation.

John (Jack) and Marty Anderson, \$100.

Janet and Bruce Nelson, \$20 in memory of Greg Blankenship

Suzanne Arndt, \$50.

**We are still missing Brandon year books for 1965, 1975, 1976, 1985, and 1987. Can you help?**

## Tidbits . . .

If you are considering a year-end charitable contribution, we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit; and therefore contributions are tax-deductible.

Consider making a contribution of \$100 or more. Your gift will be recognized by name on our contributor plaques.

Also you can make use of our three membership options: Individual or family one-year or single life memberships.

Thank you again for all who have so generously contributed to the History Center. Your help makes this all possible.

## Cement Gear Found – Story coming in next issue



Amazing artifacts are found when contractors are digging basements, building roads, digging wells; or when kids are digging just for fun. Before destroying your "finds", contact us; you may be part of preserving history.

## Brandon History Center

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### BOARD MEMBERS:

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

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

**Happy New Year from the Brandon History Center  
Board of Directors!**