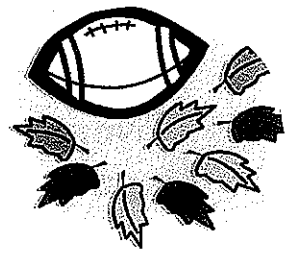




Newsletter

Urbandale Historical Society
4010 70th Street
Urbandale, IA 50322
Fall 2010



Teacher Training is the Subject of September Program

Education of children has always been an important challenge for citizens of Iowa. Each community and rural area sought the services of qualified teachers for their schools.

Bill Sherman, known for his work in preserving information about Iowa's rural schools, will present the program, Monday, September 13th at 7:00 p.m. at the Olmsted-Urban House.

A potluck supper will be held at 6:00 p.m. preceding the program for those who wish to participate. Bring food to share and your own table service.

Bill's program, sponsored through the Iowa Humanities Board will chronicle the preparation and training of Ella Pullman, a young teacher in the late 1800's. Actual certificates show how she advanced through the levels of teaching as she pursued her goals.

Some of the challenges and programs met by both teachers and students in these early school days will be presented. Audience members are encouraged to share their stories and memories.

You do not have to be a member of the Historical Society to attend. Everyone is welcome!



Feeding the Family - Topic for October Meeting

"Feeding the Family_ Grocers, Gardens and Dairies" will be the topic for our meeting on Monday, October 4th at 7:00 p.m.

Remember the delivery of chunks of ice for the ice box, milk in glass bottles delivered to the back door, chickens in the back yard, blue glass Ball canning jars, wartime ration books . . . ?



Come and share your experiences or family stories you've heard from the days before modern super markets and convenience stories. Several family members will be on hand to tell of the history of dairies in Urbandale. Some old-time kitchen items will be on display. If you have some interesting old items from the farm or kitchen - bring them to show.

Wayne and Gloria Anderson are host and hostess for the dessert following the program.

October Open House - Sunday, October 3rd



Please mark the first Sunday in October on your calendar! The Olmsted-Urban House and barn will be open for tours from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. There will be a scavenger hunt for children to find items in the house and barn. Prizes will be given!

Refreshments will be served in the dining room. Bring a friend and enjoy a fall outing.

November Meeting on Monday, November 1st

Ankeny, north of Des Moines, was founded to take advantage of the proposed route of the Des Moines and Minneapolis Railroad. John F. Ankeny, a Des Moines speculator, was a major stockholder in the railroad and bought land along it. In 1875 he platted a town into 11 blocks containing 71 lots and named it after himself. To stimulate growth, he also built the first hotel and general store. From this simple beginning as a farming community, Ankeny has experienced several periods of rapid growth until it now has a population of over 36,000.

Rosemary Taylor, of the Ankeny Area Historical Society, will present the program on Monday, November 1st at 7:00 p.m. on Ankeny's history with special emphasis on the Des Moines Ordinance Plant and its effect on the whole central Iowa area.

The United States Rubber Company opened the plant in 1942 in just seven months. Over 4,000 acres of farmland had been acquired. The Ordinance Plant produced cartridges and was the largest war-time industry in the area. At its peak, it employed 19,000 people. A couple of former workers may be present to share their experiences.

Kay Readinger and Beth Haigh are hostesses for this event.



December Open House Sunday, December 5th



In lieu of the December regular meeting, we invite all members and guests to the house for a Holiday Open House on the first Sunday of December. The house takes on a special feel when it is decorated with evergreens and berries and the Christmas tree displays the beautiful old ornaments. Come and enjoy the sights and sounds of the house as you enjoy a hot drink, home baked sweets, music and fellowship.

A Perfect Sunday Afternoon

The Ice Cream Social held June 27th was a huge success! Wayne Robbins and Norm Hewitt and their crew made it all happen this year and about \$1,400 was raised.

It was a nice June afternoon
Contributions cut expenses
Enjoyed homemade pies and cakes

Classic cars displayed
Relaxed and listened to music
Everyone enjoyed visiting
A real community event
Many volunteers appreciated



Served over 350 people
Old fashioned fun
Canning jars and flowers
Interested guests toured barn and house
A big thanks to all who helped
Lasting memories to cherish

A special thanks to Hy-Vee, Roberts Dairy and Quik Trip for their generous donations.

Fall Bus Trip to Northwest Iowa

The Fall Bus Trip is scheduled for Tuesday, October 12. Some of the details are still being worked out at the time of this newsletter, but the destination is the Pocahontas and Laurens area in Northwest Iowa.

Bob Simon and Wayne Robbins are working on the agenda that will include businesses, history, and interesting locations. Of particular interest is a stop in Pomroy to see how special kaleidoscopes are made. Lunch will be served home style in a restaurant that was once a barn built in the 1800's.

Final details and sign up will be available at the September 13th meeting, or call 276-2572 for more details. The bus will load at Welter Office Supply, 70th and Douglas. Checks to hold your place can be mailed to the house. Please mark Bus Tour on the envelope and enclose an emergency name and phone number. Thanks.

History of the Library in Urbandale

The history of the Urbandale Library was the subject of the Historical Society Meeting last October. Susan Clemmensen, audio-visual librarian, provided a visual presentation of photos taken through the years. Virginia Gee gave some factual background, and several retired staff members, who were present, shared their experiences.

Many community members have been involved with the establishment and growth of the library. The story begins with an article by Les Hamilton, editor of the Urbandale News.

He Wrote:

"Back in the 50's Ruth Daugherty wanted to know why Urbandale (incorporated as a community in 1917) didn't have a library. Mitchellville is smaller than Urbandale and they have a library. Others joined the chorus and Mayor Pat Bible appointed a five member committee which included Madeline Kaloides and Iyleene Lemon. They were charged with exploring possibilities and bringing recommendations. Then mayor, Walker Johnson, realized the need for office space for the growing city affairs, seized upon the proposal to combine city hall and a library. There were discussions held, twice there was a float in the July 4th parade, petitions were passed and leaflets dropped door-to-door calling for a bond election to authorize the city to sell \$60,000 in bonds for the purpose of building a combined city hall and library."

In 1960 the election was held. Marian Chase was among the election judges who counted the ballots at the Legion Hall for that election. Some 532 citizens voted: 314 – Yes, 209 – No, and 9 spoiled ballots. The group left the hall believing the 60% majority had not been reached. But the next day, a ruling from Polk County stated that the spoiled ballots did not count against the number voting – 60% would be 313.8. The tally showed 314 voted Yes, so the city could

proceed with a building at 3317 70th. A great example of how important each vote can be!

In February 1961 a Library Board was appointed and held their first meeting. Chairman was Les Hamilton, and other members were Karl Urban, Margaret Avaux, Don Murphy, Helen Johnson, Ruth Daugherty, and Iyleene Lemon. (Karl and his wife Maytie were longtime Urbandale residents, and owned the property at 4010 70th Street which is now known as the Olmsted-Urban House.

In June Joan LePard, an Urbandale resident, was hired as librarian to work 23 hours a week for \$3,000 annual salary. Her assistant was June Johnson. Plans were made for the official opening of the library in the lower level of the new city building. Volunteers started gathering books. Local organizations such as Urbandale Women's Club, Karen Acres Women's Club, American Legion, Legion Auxiliary, Lions Club, Community Church Women, Garden Club, Chamber of Commerce, and PTA donated money for furnishings, books and equipment.

Karl Urban headed the purchasing and he and Les Hamilton installed shelves as they arrived. By the opening there were 1,728 books on the four sections of shelves ready for reference or check out. As the collection grew, there were 100 biographies, 450 children's books, 975 fiction, 75 mysteries and 400 non-fiction and reference items. Assistants hired were Janet Lawson, Mae Nelson, and Betty Lynch. Hours were Monday 2-7p.m., Tuesday-Friday 2-9 p.m. and Saturday 10-5p.m.

The State Library furnished \$400 worth of reference books. The board voted to buy a used typewriter for \$17.50 and authorized \$2,500 to be spent on books {average book cost was under \$3.00}. An early purchase was a check-out machine that notched the card while imprinting the card number of the borrower.

Due dates were hand stamped on a slip in the front of the book.

The public responded with enthusiasm to their new library! Circulation in April 1962 was over 3,200 check-outs.

Through the years there were changes in library assistants. Some mentioned were Julia Biddle, Sheryl Gelder, Lucille Gordon and Mary DeVries. An important addition to the staff in 1965 was Hazel Demirjean, who went on to serve as cataloger for 26 years.

Circulation continued to grow, and with a boost from the popular children's summer reading program, the circulation in June 1965 was 7,400.

In March 1966, the position of librarian was made full-time with a salary of \$6,000. A new Gaylord check-out machine was added in 1968.

Through the years, the Library Board members took an active role in the direction of the library, with several of the first members staying on the board. Mr. Hamilton, Mrs. Lemon, and Mr. Urban each served 10-12 years.

A book buying guide passed by these early board members included:

1. Rely on the librarian's judgment
2. Note reader acceptance/outrage
3. Use taste—buy no filth deliberately
4. Buy a broad range of interests
5. Get durable books
6. Stay within the budget

As the collections grew there was a suggestion for the need for more space. Acting Superintendent of Schools, Dick Boyer, proposed the library be moved into the expanding high school along with the school library. When it became clear that the library was to be on the second floor and that over a third of the library patrons did not favor this change the board voted to remain separate.

Another proposal was to purchase land at 70th and Roseland across from City Hall with a proposed bond issue of \$185,000. Planning and Zoning approved the building but not the site; so the plan was put on hold. Several

other sites and proposals were suggested, but the City Council did not take action. Mayor Brick questioned whether a bond issue could pass, because of economic conditions and citizen concern over taxes. A defeat of the bond issue would jeopardize the entire city complex that was part of the long-range plans.

The existing library had approximately 1,400 square feet and by national standards another 5,000 square feet was needed to serve Urbandale's growing population. As a temporary solution, in April 1972 the library was moved with the help of volunteers to rental space in the Phipps Building at 3821 71st St. With 6,000 square feet at their disposal, the library staff was able to increase both service to patrons and the size of the collection. A traveling collection of 16mm films, art prints, and music cassette tapes was added. After 12 years of service, Karl Urban resigned from the board in September 1973.

In May 1974 a \$350,000 bond issue was passed with a 71% margin to construct a new building at 7305 Aurora Ave. on property conveyed to the city by the Urbandale School District. A Federal grant of \$100,000 was awarded to be used for additional construction costs.

Sara Pearson was hired in 1974 to coordinate the library's development. She now had a staff of eight. The four full time employees were Hazel Demirjean, Susan Clemmensen, Verda Simon and Janie Bell.

In April 1976 the new library was opened with 12,000 square feet and 32,000 books on the shelves. Among the services now offered were Regional Library privileges, meeting and conference rooms, a typewriter and adding machine for public use, programs and speakers for adults and children and increased space for leisure reading and studying. The collection included boxed games, sewing patterns and more films, cassettes and records. Jane Smith had been hired as an audio-visual librarian.

In 1987 the Urbandale Public Library Foundation was formed to be supported by

patron and corporate donations. Money could help the Library buy a computer system to replace the manual process for checking books in and out, and assist in the long-range planning for the library. The library's budget in 1985-86 was \$291,000.

By 1990 Director Pearson supervised 25 library employees and had many regular volunteers. Over 300,000 articles were checked out in a year. The collection included 75,000 books plus periodicals, cake pans, video cassettes, compact discs, records, art prints, and puppets. Hazel processed up to 500 books a month on the computer before they could be readied for check-out.

To meet changing needs, in 1991 after about 15 years, the building was remodeled to accommodate the growing collection. A new computerized circulation system was put in place to include patron check-outs and record keeping.

Urbandale continued to grow, and the library became part of the city's long range plan for development. In September 1998 Urbandale's citizens again showed support for their library by passing a bond issue with a 76% margin to construct a new building at 86th and Douglas. Part of the success was due to the project's plans to develop the building on Aurora Avenue into a Senior Center. The Library Foundation raised almost one million dollars to be used in construction for the new library. Materials were organized and transported and in July 2000 the 56,000 square foot building opened.

After 35 years as Library Director, Sara Pearson retired in 2009 and Katherine Manion was selected as the new director.

This July a celebration was held to recognize the past 10 years of the library with its expanded facilities at the 86th Street site. Statistics show tremendous growth. Circulation rose from 361,698 in 2000 to 644,028 in 2010, with a collection of a variety of materials numbering almost 160,000. Gate count of the number of persons entering the library almost tripled and the number of library card holders increased from 27,404 to

44,518 representing patrons throughout Polk County. Staff went from 23 to 41, and the number of volunteers also increased. A sign of increased demands for technology, the number of computers used by staff and patrons went from 5 in 2000 to 39 in 2010.

From the simple beginnings, Urbandale citizens continue to show pride in the way the library has expanded, and feel the staff, the materials, and services are the best in the area.

** Information compiled by Virginia Gee with the help of Susan Clemmensen



Little Girls' Tea Parties

Did you play with paper dolls as a child? Several people on the Little Girl's Tea Party Committee had memories of playing with their shoe box of paper dolls, so we used this as our theme for the annual tea parties held June 14 - 16 - 18. Our 3 sessions were full so 60 girls enjoyed making their own paper chain dolls, and designing an outfit for their paper doll using a variety of patterns and papers. Mrs. Cheryl Regan played piano selections from popular movie themes and the girls had fun naming the movie title. The girls learned about fashion, accessories, and pastimes as they toured the master bedroom and vintage clothing room.

A tasty lunch was served and the girls practiced their best manners.

A thank you luncheon for the committee members was held at the home of Kathryn Brush in July.



A Fall Tradition Continues Punch on the Porch

Punch on the Porch will again be served on Beggar's Night, October 30, at the Olmsted-Urban house from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Bring your children or grandchildren to the south porch for a cup of punch and let the friendly servers admire their costumes and listen to their jokes. This continues a tradition of when Maytie Urban hosted the children in the neighborhood.

Loved -
Volunteers -
Leaders -
Mentors -
Respected -
A Special Tribute

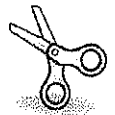
This summer marked the passing of three special Historical Society members who also played important roles in Urbandale's history.

Rufus Vawter was a longtime member of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, the American Legion, and served for 20 years on the Urbandale Sanitary Sewer District Board. He and his wife Lois particularly enjoyed the bus trips sponsored by the Historical Society.

Dale Readinger was named Urbandale's Citizen of the Year in 1996 in recognition of his many years of service to the Urbandale Community, Gloria Dei Lutheran church, Urbandale Jaycees, Urbandale Schools, Urbandale Planning and Zoning Commission, and eight years on the Urbandale City Council. Dale was an official of the Drake Relays from 1973-2004, serving as head marshal for the last several years. He was inducted into Drake Relays Hall of Fame. He and his wife Kay (currently Historical Society Secretary) have been long time members and active participants in many of our activities.

Dorothy Milligan spent a majority of her 90 years in service to others. She taught in the Urbandale Schools for 30 years before retiring in 1983 and continued to volunteer at Rolling Green Elementary School. She was a member of St. Pius X Catholic Church, Urbandale Lioness and Women's Club. She joined the Historical Society in the 1980's back in the days when a small group of persons interested in preserving Urbandale's history met in the Heritage Room at Olmsted School. She served as recording or corresponding secretary for many years. It was during this time the group made the major decision to purchase the Urban property in 1987. Dorothy provided many hours of planning and labor in the years of restoration. Because of her long-time interest in children, she was the logical choice to serve as coordinator for tours and educational programs at the Olmsted-Urban House. Dorothy also enjoyed gardening, and was responsible for many of the plantings on the grounds. She was recognized as the 1998 Urbandale Citizen of the Year for her community activities.

Clip and Save Important Dates



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- September 13 Potluck and meeting
 - October 3 Fall Open House
 - October 4 Meeting
 - October 12 Fall Bus Trip
 - October 30 Punch on the Porch
 - November 1 Meeting
 - December 5 Holiday Open House
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