

URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

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Fall 2026

FALL FESTIVAL 2026



The 4th Urbandale Historical Society Fall Festival will be held on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 9 to 11 am at the Olmsted-Urban House. The Urbandale Lions Club will be here again serving their world-famous pancakes and sausage. There will be activities for the kids and of course the House and Barn will be open for tours.

URBANDALE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

A meeting of the Marketing Committee of the Society was pleasantly surprised by a visit from Mayor Bob Andweg, several members of the City, Urbandale Chamber of Commerce and past awardees to present our own **Jo Henry** with the proclamation announcing her as Urbandale's 2026 Citizen of the Year.



She is being recognized for her work with UCAN, Dollars for Scholars and the Urbandale Historical Society among her other contributions.

Congratulations Jo.

Central Iowa Historical Alliance

For the past several years a number of people from area historical groups have been meeting intermittently to share ideas relating to the history of their communities. We have been a part of this group. Last June, Marisa Beal and Jo Henry attended an evening in Bondurant with the group. On Sept. 3 we hosted the group at the Olmsted-Urban House.

Folks from Bondurant, Ankeny, Johnston and Altoona were in attendance. We had a lively discussion on a variety of common topics ranging from facilities, funding, membership, program and activities.

It is nice to share ideas and realize what we experience is the same as others. We came away with some good ideas for our Urbandale Historical society. The group has established a Facebook page to share event information and other happenings. We will all meet again in early 2027.

UPCOMING EVENTS

One tradition that continues is Punch on the Porch. Maybe Marisa Beal will be on the porch again this year to listen to jokes and hand out punch and candy to the ghosts and goblins visiting the house. Yes, the punch will be served in the glass cups.



The Olmsted-Urban House is open the first Sunday each month from 2-4 pm for visits and tours. At our last Board meeting several suggestions were made to promote awareness and interest in the Open House times. Among the suggestions one was to showcase some of our collections, another was to invite guests to play in some period games.

In that spirit, at our November Open House (Nov. 1, 2-4 pm), Carol Lee Reikenberg will share a display of vintage clip-on Christmas Tree Candle holders. This should help us start our thinking of the upcoming holidays.



December will again offer two opportunities to visit the house in all her finest for the Christmas holidays. We will have our Annual Christmas Open House on **Sunday, Dec. 6** (2-4 pm) then again on **Sunday, Dec. 13** (2-4 pm). The Dec. 13 event will include lots of activities for the kids and families, including a cookie walk and opportunity to pick up some holiday gift cards for the stocking stuffers. The house and rooms will be decorated for the season and tours available.

Keep up with all the happenings with our Facebook page and website: www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org

News of the Urbandale Historical Society

We have been very fortunate to have received several grants to support the operations of the Urbandale Historical Society. We have benefitted from ***Bravo of Greater Des Moines*** over the past several years with operational funding support which has been of significant import in helping us pay our bills.

We recently were awarded a ***Community Betterment Grant*** from the Polk County Board of Supervisors which has been used to purchase a new computer and software for the operation and management of our program (see Summer Newsletter). Among the new software is an updated program that will help us catalog our acquisitions.

Endow Urbandale has most recently awarded us monies for a new freezer and tree removal on the grounds. We have a very large tree at the back of the house that is showing its age and could pose a threat with a serious storm. Luke Miller, our able resident arborist, will advise us with the next moves. He has been invaluable in adding new trees and shrubs throughout the grounds.

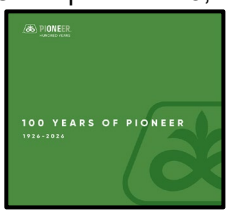
We also secured an ***Urbandale City Betterment Grant*** of $4,850 for completion of the Society's digital project. This will help us digitize and make available the rest of the Blue Jay Chatters and Urbandale Press Citizens we have found.

Marisa Beal is to be thanked for all her efforts at securing these grant monies to further the mission and operation of the Urbandale Historical Society.

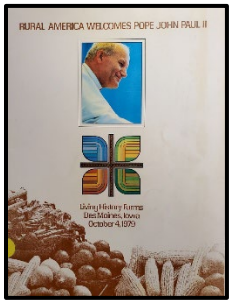
Even with these grants, we still have needs for operation and maintenance. That is why your generous support as members is so important, not just in dollars but in time and expertise.

Historical Society Programs

On September 13, David Bowen shared with us the history of Pioneer's 100 years. It was a fascinating walk through time which really brought home Iowa's role in agriculture, then and now. He generously gifted us and the Urbandale Library a copy of the Pioneer Centennial book.



Coming up on **Sunday, Oct. 11** at the Urbandale Library from 2-4 pm. Father Steve Orr will be recalling when Pope John Paul came to Iowa. This event put little Urbandale, Iowa squarely at the center of the world for several days. Please go to the Library's site to register (Urbandale Historical Society: The Pope's Visit to Urbandale | Urbandale Public Library). There is no cost for any of our programs and you do not need to register to attend, but registration helps us plan for attendance size and be sure we have the needed space.



The rest of programs for 2026-27 are:

- **Nov 8: White Pole Road** with Brenda Dudley
- **Dec 13: Christmas at the Olmsted-Urban House**
- **Jan 10, 2027: Urbandale Historical Society 50th Anniversary** with Pat Finnerty
- **Feb 14:** History of Drake University with Benedict Chatelain
- **Mar 14: I**owa Orchard
- **Apr 11: TBD**
- **May 16: Urbandale Community Church/Urbandale United Church of Christ** with Jeff Couch
- **Jun 13: Hoover Presidential Museum** with Mundi McCarty

Except for the Christmas events, our Programs will be at the **Urbandale Library from 2-4 pm**. If you have any ideas for a program topic and speaker, please let us know. We hope to see you there.

Welcome Dean Hatch

Welcome to our newest member of the Urbandale Historical Society Board. Dean Hatch brings a wealth of lived knowledge of local history of Urbandale to the Board. He is a graduate of Urbandale schools, former teacher and administrator.

He comes from a long-time Urbandale family, Carter and Karolyn Hatch were his parents. Karolyn worked for the Urbandale school for many years and Carter was a local farmer and quite active in the Urbandale Lions Club. See the attached story about the Carter Homestead to give a glimpse of Dean's family.

Welcome Dean.

The Board is composed of volunteers who have an interest in Urbandale History and are committed to fulfilling our Mission. We are in need of people interested in becoming more engaged with the Society in a variety of ways. If you are interested, please let us know by calling the house (515-270-2917) or e-mail: urbandalehistory@gmail.com .

HATCH FAMILY HOMESTEAD

The following is an article from the August 27, 1992 Urbandale News by Steve Davis.

The rites of passage

Hatch Family Farm: From quiet homestead to possible office development

by STEVE DAVIS, News editor

Fifty years ago, George and Emily Hatch bought 120 acres of rolling farmland far removed from the hustle and bustle of the city.

An abandoned, dilapidated 150-year-old house is all that remains on the 15-acres the family still owns east of 111th Street and north of Living History farms.

The Hatch family also owned 40-acres west of 111th Street and east of Interstate 35/80.

"My dad started farming during the war," Carter Hatch, 3288 111th St., who now owns the land along with his sister, Mirium Chambers, of California, said. "We couldn't get engine parts because of the war effort, so I remember dad used to go to a blacksmith's shop on Hickman Road by the railroad tracks to get all of his tools repaired."



A view of part of the Hatch Homestead today

In the 1940s, what is now Living History Farms was a state-run prison farm. At that time, 111th Street was known as State Farm Road.

George and Emily Hatch owned a patch of land between 104th Street and what is now Interstate 35/80 north of the prison farm.

The farm extended north for one-fourth mile, to a point approximately where Justin Drive meets 104th Street.

In the late 1960s, the prison farm was sold after two prisoners escaped and walked to a general store at 86th Street and Hickman Road to call a cab.

"We used to use prison labor to help out on our farm," Hatch said. "I guess the state officials decided that civilization was getting just a little too close if an escaped prisoner could get a cab, so they decided to move out to Newton."

The prison farm was sold to Ronald Bergeson, a retired banker from Des Moines. When Bergeson purchased the farm in 1972, he offered George Hatch a comparable price for his adjacent 80 acres.

The only land east of 111th Street that George Hatch kept was the 15-acres where his home stood.

Middlewood Inc., a division of Midwest Resources has plans for a 110-acre, $3 million Walnut Ridge Business Park northwest of the Hatch land.

Approximately 80 acres of the development will be built on part of George and Emily Hatch's old farmland.

George and Emily Hatch lived in the old farmhouse until 1974. Since that time, two of their grandchildren, Dean and Greg Hatch have lived in the home at different times. Both of Carter Hatch's sons and their families live west of 111th Street.

Carter Hatch said he heard the original house was more than 100 years old when George Hatch purchased it and moved it from 104th Street and Douglas Avenue to its current location.

Carter Hatch moved to 111th Street in 1949 and his land was annexed into the city.in 1960. "There have been a lot of changes out here since we first came out," Hatch said. "I remember when Douglas was a dirt road and when 111th Street went all the way through from Douglas Avenue to Cummings, Iowa.

"We farmed our land until 1989. The city has moved out here now, but it still feels a lot like the country to us."

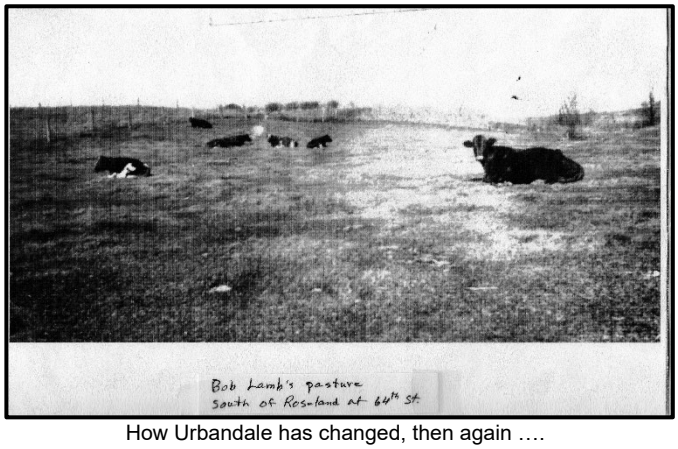
Hatch said the 15-acres has been for sale for more than 15 years, but that he has no plans to develop the property on his own

NEW ACQUISITION

Linda Gronert had donated a tub of old newspapers, Life Magazines, etc. relating to significant events of the time from the 1940s through the 1960s. Her parents were teachers and collected them for historical significance.

MEMORIALS

It has been reported that Mike Porter has passed away.



How Urbandale has changed, then again ….

MEMBERSHIP

New Members

Sandy Stahowick 9105 Beechwood Dr. Urbandale, IA 50322 s.stahowick@myctl.net	Jennifer Croom 252 NW Common Pl. Waukee, IA 50263 s.stahowick@myctl.net

With changes coming to Century Link, if anyone changes their e-mail address , please let us know so we can update our files.

Our Membership year runs from Jan 1 through Dec 31. Please watch for our Call for renewal coming later this year. You can always go online at www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org under the Membership tab to join or renew your membership.



Western part of Urbandale 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUPPORTERS

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