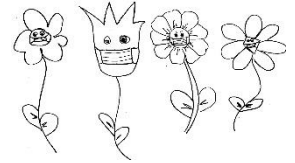


URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



4010 70TH STREET
URBANDALE, IA 50322
(515) 270-2917
www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org



Spring 2020

Urbandale Historical Society Happenings

It has been quite a year. After an enjoyable Christmas season, we embarked on an exciting 2020 with plans for a number of informative programs and a Spring Bus trip. In January we hosted Ed Morrow and his presentation of *'Kilroy was here and other enduring slogans'*.

February's program featured Louise Gately of the West Des Moines Historical Society, about James Jordan and the early development of Valley Junction/West Des Moines. Mike Voght and Mary Jones visited us in March with a discussion of Camp Dodge and its history.

Then the Pandemic hit Iowa. The April and May programs were cancelled because of the Coronavirus pandemic and everything came to a screeching halt. We are living through our own Pandemic much like that of 1918-19. Virginia Gee has written two interesting articles for us of that period.

We hope you all are doing alright. If any of you have been keeping a journal of what life has been like during this period or know of someone who has been keeping a record or journal and would be willing to share please let us know as we would love to add it to our files as a record of the Coronavirus Pandemic in Urbandale. You can send it to the house or e-mail: urbandalehistory@gmail.com.

As for the future, well, As for now, we are **not** planning on the Ice Cream Social for this June. We might try later this summer. All 4th of July activities have been cancelled EXCEPT for the fireworks.

We are not sure when we will be able to resume activities at the Olmsted House. Marilyn Finnerty has been busy planting and keeping the garden around the house looking nice. The Urbandale Garden Club should be working on the Butterfly Garden soon.

Please watch our website (www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Urbandale-Historical-Society) for updates and more information.

Spanish Flu Epidemic at Camp Dodge in 1918

As part of his presentation in March, Michael Voght, curator at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, shared the impact of Spanish Flu in 1918 on Camp Dodge.

The influenza triggered a pandemic that killed an estimated 50 million people world-wide including 600,000 in the United States. This was more than 10 times the number of military personnel that killed in World War I. The flu killed more than 6,000 Iowans and 702 soldiers at Camp Dodge, about two percent of the post's 33,500 men stationed there at that time.

The virus seemed to attack otherwise healthy people in their 20's and 30's. Symptoms included fever, aches and upper respiratory infection, often resulting in a severe pneumonia.

Camp Dodge saw its first case of Spanish Flu in September 1918, sweeping through the post until its decline in early November. The worst number of deaths occurred during October 8-16 when there were 50 deaths per day. In one 12-hour period there were 996 new cases to be handled [*a 'case' in 1918 was a person with clinical symptoms, whereas today a 'case' is simply a person testing positive on a diagnostic test*]. It was reported there were about 8,000 troops sick with the flu during this peak period. The crush overwhelmed the camp hospital with the barracks being converted to house the sick.

The Red Cross called in medical personnel from around the area to help care for the sick soldiers. On October 10 there were 245 nurses on duty, only six days later the number of nurses had increased to 598. Doctors, nurses and other staff worked continuously and some of them also succumbed.

All flu casualties in Camp Dodge received a death certificate and were transported to be buried at locations directed by family or at a military cemetery. There were no burials of flu victims at Camp Dodge during this tragic time in history.

Iowans Faced Many Challenges when Spanish Flu Arrived in 1918

Who would have thought only a few months ago that we would all be involved in an important time in history? The Covid 19 virus has influenced operations related to our schools, churches, governments, amusements and club activities. Individually, we are encouraged to stay home.

It is interesting to compare how Iowans are dealing with the current epidemic compared with the infamous *Spanish Flu of 1918*. In the Fall of that year the Iowa Board of Health "quarantined" the entire state ordering all "public gathering places" to close including all churches, places of amusement, schools and other places of congregating. Iowans were required to wear face masks when interacting with others in public spaces.

The 1918 influenza was daunting because no one understood the menace and fear and panic dominated. Since there were no known cures, folk treatments including whiskey, lemon juice and "turpentine rubs". In desperation, people might immerse the "patient" in a tub filled with ice in hopes of reducing the fever.

Iowans throughout the state were especially affected where large numbers of people lived and worked closely together. At the University of Iowa, 35 staff and students died from the flu or pneumonia brought on by it. It was thought that the strict measures taken to control the disease helped control the spread of the flu at the university. The campus was under strict military police security. Anyone entering or leaving the campus had to show a pass.

At Iowa State College passes were also required for entry to campus. After the campus hospital exceeded its capacity, the victims were housed in the gym. Canvas sheets were used as "walls" between the beds. Despite the care given, 51 deaths occurred at Iowa State.

Another Iowa institution hit even harder by the flu was Camp Dodge, where soldiers were training for service in World War I. Medical officers had placed the camp under quarantine keeping soldiers from leaving or visitors from entering. However, the Camp was still in the midst of construction requiring laborers from the city. The result was a daily movement of citizens to and from camp. The epidemic at Camp Dodge eventually resulted in over 700 deaths.

As the epidemic at Camp Dodge passed its peak, the real danger reached the civilian population in Des Moines. With public pressure, the Health Board lifted the closing decree. Residents were once again free to attend a movie or theatre and children returned to their school classes. The School Board voted to reduce the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday breaks to make up for lost class time so male students could still get out in time for the spring planting season.

But, as some predicted, once the social guidelines were removed cases began to increase. Once again schools were closed. On December 2 the wearing of face masks was required in all public places even theatres and college classrooms. The mask rule didn't last long though as theatre goers were unhappy, they had to watch stage performances or movies with masks on and they just stayed home. The Board of Health revoked the order and once again the wearing of masks was voluntary. Some control measures were still needed however as the number of new influenza cases continued to rise. Coincidentally the day, the mask order was revoked turned out to be the single worst day of the epidemic with nearly 500 cases reported. All dance halls, skating rinks and amusement centers closed. Churches were allowed to be opened but with no Sunday School classes. Most clergy, however, felt that regular services should not be held until all danger had passed.

By December 16, the influenza situation had begun to decline. Social distancing measures were relaxed and Des Moines residents could once again attend dances, go to games and ice skate at the city rink. Schools, though, remained closed through the holidays to open December 30. Communities throughout Iowa had dealt with the infamous Spanish Flu in a variety of ways. It was estimated that between 1918-1919 the powerful virus had infected at least 93,000 Iowans with 6,000 deaths.

New Members

We are happy to welcome the following new members to the Urbandale Historical Society.

Heather Pollard 1025 Lakewood Dr. Southlake, TX 76092 872-890-5521	Kenneth Clark 12479 Douglas Pkwy Urbandale, IA 50323 515-276-8465
Jim Garwood & Val McKinney 4015 70th Street Urbandale, IA 50322 515-306-0882	

Membership and Financial

With the loss of our Annual Ice Cream Social this summer, the Historical Society is taking a financial hit. The Ice Cream Social is our main fund-raising activity of the year. Basic membership fees go toward the yearly budget expenses of utilities, insurance, lawn care, snow removal, computer work and office and kitchen supplies. These cost us about \$15,000 per year. We are fortunate in the past to have benefitted from grants from Bravo, Endow Urbandale and even the city of Urbandale.

As of today, we have 56 paid memberships generating \$4,375. Last year at this time we had 102 members for \$7,150. With the loss of the revenue from the Ice Cream Social, we are running very short. We need your support, both financially and in terms of younger blood and fresh ideas.

For those who have renewed their membership, **Thank You**. For those who have not, please do so. Also, please share with your family, friends and neighbors to encourage them to join us in helping to preserve the history and legacy of Urbandale. Additionally, please consider becoming a more active part of the Society by serving as an officer or Board member.

Acknowledgement of Supporters

We would like to acknowledge the following groups for their generous contributions and support for the programs and operations of the Urbandale Historical Society.



URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership is on a calendar year: Jan. 1 to Dec. 31
Contributions are tax deductible.

Supporting: \$25
 Sustaining: \$50

Patron: \$100
 Benefactor: \$500 and up

Special Gifts – Memorials are appreciated

Name: _____ Spouse: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____
e-mail: _____

Please indicate your interests below:

Buildings/Grounds/House Maintenance
 House-keeping
 Ice Cream Social
 Publicity
 Refreshments
 Special Projects / Events
 Tour Guides
 History (Collecting, Preserving)

Finance
 Gardening
 Membership
 Programs
 Records/Office work
 Restoration / Acquisitions
 Trips
 Other talents (please specify on back))

Have Urbandale information, photographs or memorabilia to donate or lend for copying.

Send Completed form to: URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
4010 70th Street Urbandale, IA 50322-2616

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