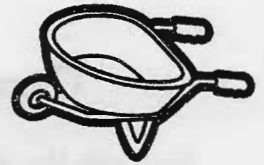




Newsletter

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



Plant Sale This Saturday

Don't miss the Plant Sale on Saturday, May 1st from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on the lawn of the Olmsted-Urban House.

We need you to divide your perennials and bring your extras to the sale. Ask your friends and neighbors to attend. This is one of our most popular money-making events, and we depend on your support. We have been able to help many beginning gardeners get started with their landscape plans. You'll also find long time gardeners standing in line at the 9 a.m. opening, hoping to find plants they do not already have or need to replace.

Gardeners are always looking for hostas, peonies, daylilies, and other varieties such as coreopsis, daisies, columbine, iris, phlox, primrose and yarrow. Groundcovers such as sedums and ajuga are also popular. Miscellaneous items such as small shrubs, canna bulbs and small house plants are also welcome.

Bring your plants in plastic bags, milk jugs or whatever you want. Please label the plants as to color and approximate growth height if you know. We would like to have your plants on Friday if possible, or before 9:00 on Saturday. You can leave them on the porch at the Olmsted-Urban House any time.

We have a lot of empty plastic pots of various sizes available for your use. If you would like some pots, or need help in dividing some of your plants call Anne Ulm, plant sale chairperson, at 276-1568. We are fortunate to have Anne's expertise and many willing volunteers.



Save the Date

Annual Ice Cream Social

Sunday, June 27

2:00 - 4:00

Please mark your calendar so you don't miss this unique event. Homemade ice cream, pie or cake, and a beverage will be served to you for \$4.00. As usual, the social will be held on the front lawn of the Olmsted-Urban House. Vintage automobiles will be on display and the house and barn will be open for tours. Invite your friends and family, and come enjoy a summer afternoon.



Great News - Grant Awarded

The Abbie Gardner Questers group, who were instrumental in helping organize, research, and complete the vintage clothing room submitted a grant in January. The grant was approved at the Iowa Quester State Day on April 10th. A check for \$375 will be presented to the Urbandale Historical Society on June 15th. The money will be used for display items used in the bedroom. Thanks to all who made this a reality!

It's Tea Party Time!

The committee met on April 8th at the home of Beth Haigh to begin planning for the June tea parties. The dates will be June 14, 16, and 18. Our theme will be "A Paper Doll Tea". The girls will learn about the history of paper dolls, do crafts, tour the house, and have lunch.

Reservations are needed as seating is limited to 20 each day. Call soon to save a spot for a special little girl.

Please call Ginny Campbell at 276-4168 or Kay Readinger at 276-2017 for reservations.

Care of the Grounds

Through the years the property at the corner of 70th and Airline has been important to the Urbandale community. Gatherings and picnics were held on the lawn many times when the Olmsted and Urban families lived there.

The Historical Society has continued the tradition with the annual Ice Cream Social and other events.

Upkeep of the grounds and gardens is an important responsibility. A professional lawn service is hired for mowing and general lawn care. The rest of the work is done by Society volunteers. Major work for the large flower garden and the one at the south side of the house is being planned by Maxine and Carroll Edwards. Maxine has evaluated what was previously growing and made plans for future planting of traditional varieties of perennials, roses, and small shrubs. You may have seen them working in the gardens this spring.

Ginny Campbell and Donna Thompson are responsible for the planting of colorful geraniums in the porch urns and around the flag pole.

Wayne and Gloria Anderson have assisted with some of the upkeep of shrubs. Several other members have volunteered to help Virginia Gee with weeding and general yard maintenance. All volunteers are appreciated. Let us know if you would like to help.

Special thanks go to Ginny and Jerry Campbell. In 2006, they donated two red maples and three pear trees in memory of her parents, Mugs and Helen Olmsted. As they bloom this spring, these trees are adding much to the beauty of the north lawn.



Spring Tour XXXIV

May 11th, 2010

7:30 am Departure

Sixty trains per day pass the Carroll, Iowa Depot, our first stop on the May 11th historical society bus tour. Upon arrival at the depot, now restored as the Chamber of Commerce office, we will enjoy refreshments and a tour of the building.

Our step-on guide, Marilyn Setzler, will next escort us to the Carroll Historical Museum. Tour guests wishing to view the 1930's WPA court house murals may step across the street to see them. Our tour continues with a brief bus ride by several homes and buildings of historical interest.

One o'clock lunch will be served at the Santa Maria Restaurant and Winery, a former auto dealership with unique features that has been fully restored. A tour will be available. After lunch there will be a drive by the Rohner House, Carroll Cemetery, and Swan Lake, then to Roselle to visit Holy Guardian Angels Church. Finally, we will travel to Templeton to tour the Templeton Rye Distillery and hear the colorful story of this libation.

The bus loads at Welter Office Supply, 70th and Douglas. We leave promptly at 7:30 am. A check for \$60 to the Urbandale Historical Society will hold your place. Mark Bus Tour on the envelope. Enclose an emergency name and phone number with your check. Call 276-2752 or 276-1370 for more information



Founding of Urbandale

People of the Urbandale area have a history of working together for the good of the community; and interest in the education of children played an important role in the initial establishment of our town.

Some concerned citizens organized as Greater Urbandale Boosters and invited others to a meeting at Hays Grocery Store on October 31, 1912. The invitation read, "There are several matters of importance to all of us that need attention, and we would like you to come. (signed) L. L. Talbot"

Later, a larger group gathered at Center School, the rural school originally built on the Milligan farm in the west part of Webster Township. (The other school in the area, McDivitt Grove on Meredith Drive, was becoming part of the Johnston School District.) The families decided it was important to build a community school at 70th and Douglas. They worked to raise \$2,000 and by 1916 a two-room school house was ready for occupancy. There were two teachers and the children were divided with the younger children in four grades in one room and the older grades in an adjoining room.

During this time there was state legislative emphasis on school consolidation. To avoid having to become part of the Johnston Consolidated District, Urbandale needed to form its own independent school district. This could be done only if the town itself was legally incorporated. The proposed town comprised about 2,600 acres about three miles west of Des Moines and one mile north of the Walnut-Webster Township lines. There were approximately 350 inhabitants, with 60 eligible voters. (Women could not yet vote.)

Forty seven residents petitioned for an election. C. C. Olmsted, Otto Laverrenz, L. L. Talbott, William Echey, and J. C. Witmer were appointed by the District Court in Polk County to organize and proceed with an election set for April 5, 1917 at the new school house. Notices were posted in public

places and published in the Des Moines Daily Record, a newspaper published in Des Moines, "there being no newspaper published within the limits of the proposed town".

The April vote was unanimous—49 votes cast in favor and none against. On May 3rd, the new Urbandale citizens elected Mr. Laverrenz as the first mayor. Councilmen were E. T. Botsford, G. W. Mead, Mark Stuart, and J. C. Witmer. Walter Parmenter was chosen treasurer and M. A. Olmsted, assessor. The mayor was to receive one dollar for each council meeting and other officials were to get \$.25 each. Meetings were held at the school house for many years and the town's records were kept in a locker in the building until the first city hall was built.

Information compiled by Virginia Gee, Urbandale Historical Society, from 1917 newspaper reports and Listening and Learning - Urbandale by Mae Nelson. 2010

Tours

Because the Urbandale Historical Society has no paid director or staff, the Olmsted-Urban House is not open on a regular basis. All house upkeep, office work, and collection of historic materials are done by volunteers, however, not at a set time.

Several Open House events are planned throughout the year, and people in the area are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to visit and see what changes have been made. Special educational tours for school classes, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, and interested community groups can be arranged by contacting Beth Haigh at 276-9654.

If you are having out-of-town guests and you would like to show them the Olmsted-Urban House or look at some of the historical information about Urbandale, call Beth or Virginia Gee at 276-0222, and we will try to arrange an appointment.

Let us know if you have ideas on how we can share Urbandale history with members of the community.

Special Quilts



One of the goals of the Historical Society is to provide a place where items related to Urbandale history or heritage families can be preserved.

Several items not usually on public display were the subject of the program on March 1st. Janice Winey gave information about the hand-loomed blue and tan wool coverlet dating back to the 1850's. The coverlet, donated by Ruth Olmsted McKinney, had originally belonged to the family of her mother, Olive Stuart Olmsted. The Stuarts originally lived in Kentucky before coming to farm in Webster Township in the 1800's.

A friendship quilt was a money-raising project for the women of the Urbandale Community Church in 1926. Names of nearly 400 family members and businesses were embroidered on individual pieces. The finished quilt provides an interesting record of Urbandale at that time. When the quilt was put up for auction, Millard Olmsted was the highest bidder. He returned it to be bid on again. The next purchaser also put it up again. This happened several times. The last time Millard got it, he kept it and gave it to Laura Stuart Phillips, his sister-in-law. She gave it to Laura Olmsted Jennings, her niece, about 1949. The family gave it to the Historical Society.

A Bicentennial quilt was completed as part of Urbandale's observance in 1976. Mae Nelson organized the plan for 60 blocks. Designed and completed by people from the ages of 9 to 89, each of the colorful embroidered blocks shows some building or symbol of importance to Urbandale or Iowa history. The quilt at one time was displayed in the front entrance of Olmsted School.

In the 1980's an all community celebration was planned at Living History Farms. A competition was held to develop a logo to symbolize Urbandale's unity, while blending five school districts in one community. The design was shown on a billboard by Dave Nagle and incorporated into a colorful wall

hanging by quilter Gladys Boals. The wall hanging was given to the Historical Society for safekeeping and was later featured at the "Urbandale is Open" community celebration sponsored by the Urbandale Chamber.

In 1993 more than two dozen Rolling Green fifth graders were studying the environment, ecology, and how Iowa farmers used the land. The students decided to make a quilt depicting this environmental theme. Each student designed a block. Longtime Urbandale resident and quilting expert Nancy Pelly, stitched the blocks together to create the quilt which then hung in the school's media center.

The Historical Society is glad to serve as a repository for these creative works, though it is too bad that because of limited space some have to be stored away. All the quilts will be featured at the Fall Open House. Contact Janice Winey or Virginia Gee if you have a special interest in viewing one of these items. Perhaps you or a family member helped with one of these projects.

Membership

Dues for membership are coming in steadily. We value each member received and ask that you encourage neighbors, family members, and friends who would enjoy our monthly programs and events to join. A \$25 membership would make a wonderful gift!

Volunteers Responded

The volunteer survey that we mailed in March gleaned a good response. We have compiled a great list of volunteers to call upon throughout the year. Thank you for taking the time to fill it out and return it. You can still send your survey back anytime, if it happens to still be sitting on your desk!