



# URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

4010 70<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
URBANDALE, IA 50322  
(515) 270-2917

[www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org)



## Winter 2020

### New Website and e-mail address

Please visit our new and improved website  
[www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org)

It is still a work in progress, so please feel free to offer any suggestions to us at our new e-mail address:

[Urbandalehistory@gmail.com](mailto:Urbandalehistory@gmail.com)

### Upcoming Programs

#### January



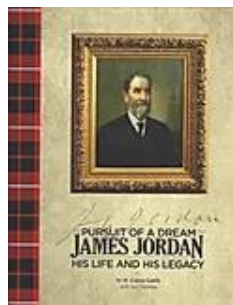
Our January Program will feature Ed Morrow providing us with a lively explanation of the origin of the slogan from WWII days, ***Kilroy Was Here***. This

slogan gained fame in the 1940s and is still around today. Come Sunday, January 12 (2:00 pm) for an enlightening afternoon.

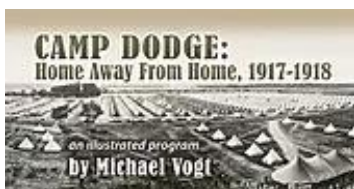
#### February:

Louise Gately from West Des Moines will be our featured speaker in February (**Sunday February 9 at 2:00 pm**). She will present a program about James Jordan, his life and the roots of Valley Junction (West Des Moines). Louise is the author of *Pursuit of a Dream*:

*James Jordan - His Life and Legacy*.



#### March:



In March Mike Vogt and Mary Jones will tell us about our neighbor to the North, Camp Dodge. Come hear their stories on

**Sunday, March 8 at 2:00 pm.**

#### April:

In April Ginny Campbell will lead a discussion and share stories of Urbandale's Roller Rink. She has assembled a panel of leading experts on the history and back stories of Urbandale's entertainment center. The date has yet to be determined as Easter is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday. Watch our web site for more information.



#### May:

Urbandale's own hero from WWII, Glen McDole, will be the topic of our May program. Pat Finnerty will be presenting on the adventures of Glen during those trying times. The date has yet to be determined as Mother's Day is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday. Watch our web site for more information.



### Christmas Open House – 2019

The Christmas Open House held December 8 was a great success. For years traditionally held the first Sunday in December, because of the later date of Thanksgiving, the event was scheduled a week later.



Special Events Chairman Ginny Campbell and volunteers spent the week ahead getting ready.

Decorating were Pat Nawrocki, Sandi Porter, Kay Readinger, Beth Haigh, Kathryn Brush, Cynthia Dabrieo, Carol Lee Riekenberg and Virginia Gee.

Norm Huitt brought a variety of large toys and set up an electric train to circle around the base of the

brightly lighted Christmas tree. Carol Lee and Virginia prepared a table display of timeless toys and parlor games.

On Sunday afternoon Jeff Couch, our Historic Santa met visitors on the porch. Serving as hosts and hostesses were Pat Finnerty, Norm Huitt, Jo Henry, Kay Readinger, Ann Readinger, Beth Haigh and Ginny Campbell. Guests were encouraged to tour the House, view the toys in the Children's Room with Carol Lee and talk with Virginia about historical items in the Office.

Local musician Amelia Hammond played Christmas carols throughout the afternoon. Amelia plays the piano at the Von Maur Department Store during the holiday season.

Serving refreshments in the dining room were Jan Pitcher, Donna Scrimager and Cynthia Dabrieo. Ginny thanked the number of volunteers who provided festive cookies.



Visitors were a combination of those who look forward to this annual event and many coming for the first time. Plan now to attend next year and bring a friend. It's a great way to start the holiday season.

### Urbandale History Day

November 10 was celebrated as Urbandale History Day by Proclamation of Mayor Bob Andeweg. This day was to celebrate the heritage of the Olmsted Family and the designation of the Olmsted Family Farmhouse to the National Register of Historic



Places. We had a large turnout of community, dignitaries and Olmsted family members. President Norm Huitt led the affair with opening remarks and introduction of guests. Ginny (Olmsted) Campbell acted as hostess extraordinaire with so many of her relatives in attendance from both the Clarence and Millard sides of the family. Following a reading of the Proclamation by Mayor Bob Andeweg President Norm Huitt unveiled the plaque beside the front door. The ceremonies were followed by a few words from Virginia Gee, historian, and the showing of a slide show of the history of the Olmsted-Urban House.



### Olmsted Elementary School

It's Official ... After much discussion, the new elementary school under construction on Prairie will be named the *Millard A.*



*Olmsted Elementary School.* The original building dedicated in 1954 was closed this past spring and demolition began immediately. The new two-story building will be constructed on the site, but architecturally will have no resemblance to the old Olmsted building

When the question was first raised as to what to name the new school, some members of the Historical Society took an active role in presenting background information to inform the public. It was found many current Urbandale residents and even some Olmsted school faculty had limited knowledge of why the original school carried the Olmsted name. Articles were written for the *Des Moines Register* and *Urbandale Living* magazine telling the story of the

important role Millard Olmsted played in establishing the first school, providing leadership to get the Urbandale area established as a community in 1917 and serving on the Urbandale School Board for 17 years.

The Urbandale School Board wanted specific community input on what to name the new building. A select committee came up with a number of ideas and the top three names were submitted for a survey of community members and district employees. A total of 2,222 responses were received and Millard A. Olmsted Elementary was the most popular choice. The Superintendent submitted the results and the School Board approved the name in December, 2019. The commons/cafeteria and courtyard area will be named for Isabell Jensen to recognize the name of the other elementary school to close. The other finalists: Justin A. Martin and Peggy Whitson will be honored with various art work in the building.

---

## Urbandale Women Elected to Serve on the City Council

When Urbandale became incorporated more than 100 years ago the first City Council members were C. Clarence Olmsted, E.T. Botsford, George Mead, Mark Stuart and J.C. Witmer. In all the later decades, only a few women have been elected to serve.

In the 1950's **Iyleene Lemon** and husband Clark had moved from Des Moines and soon became involved in the concerns of their new community. Three candidates for City Council in 1957 supported a controversial proposal to have Urbandale annexed by Des Moines. Iyleene was part of a slate of candidates who opposed this move. They successfully defeated their opponents by a margin of more than 2 to 1 and no annexation proceeded. Among her Council goals were the completion of the street and sidewalk programs and closer relations between School Board, Council and civic organizations.

The busy housewife with sons, 11 and 9 years old, and daughters, 7 and 5, took an active role in the community as Den Mother in Scouting, P.T.A., Karen Acres Women's Club and American Legion Auxiliary. She later served on the Board for the new Urbandale Library for ten years. She helped organize the City Hostess Plan for the Urbandale Women's Club and personally greeted hundreds of newcomers to Urbandale over the years.

Iyleene achieved another milestone when in 1971 she was the first woman to receive the Citizen of the Year Award. Through these decades Iyleene has continued to support a number of community activities and at the Historical Society's recent celebration enjoyed meeting the newest Councilwoman, Bridget Carberry Montgomery, who will be the latest woman to serve.

After Iyleene, it was 1981 before another woman was elected to the City Council. **Miriam Cline**. Miriam, her husband and their four children had lived in Urbandale since 1949. She had served as a City Hostess and was active with the Urbandale United Church of Christ. She got involved in city programs by serving on the Recreation Committee and the Park Board. She had special concern for the elderly and less affluent people and believed in the importance of representation on the City Council. Miriam served three terms and was honored as Citizen of the Year in 1985. She continued her interest in the community particularly opportunities for senior citizens. Miriam passed away July 5, 2015 at Ramsey Village at the age of 94.

**Marilyn Kollmorgen**, Urbandale's 1979 Citizen of the Year, is noted for her many years of community involvement. Having served six years on the Urbandale School Board and president of the Chamber of Commerce, she was a logical choice to be appointed to fill a vacancy on the City Council in 1991 and was officially elected in November. She went on to serve two terms during a period of the city's rapid growth. Community input was one of her main concerns as she hoped to keep residents informed and involved. Having served on so many Boards and committees, she could see the value of co-operating in achieving city goals. She was particularly interested in the development of parks and neighborhoods with the positive effect on family life. Marilyn and husband Robert raised three children in the home on Melanie Drive. Though their address is now West Des Moines, they continue active support of Urbandale civic projects.

**Susan Siebke** followed Marilyn with one term beginning in 1999. There were a number of long-term decisions that had to be made related to fiscal responsibility and she was proud of the course Urbandale city government had taken. She enjoyed her contacts with the community but chose not to run for re-election. With her husband Stan, she continued to support the community.



## Can You Solve the Mystery?

**Mary Polson**, long-time community volunteer had served on the Parks and Recreation Board before she was elected to the City Council in 2004. She was particularly concerned with balanced growth on both sides of town, long-term planning, a capital improvements plan, protecting and preserving the parks and trails system and the Caring Corps. After serving two terms she provided leadership for the new Urbandale Community Action Network (UCAN). She was named Citizen of the Year in 2010. She still lives in Urbandale, works part-time for Iles Funeral Home and continues to take an active role with many volunteer groups including the Lions club and the Historical Society.

**Bridget Carberry Montgomery** was elected this past November to serve on the Urbandale City Council. She and her husband Terry have lived in Urbandale since 2007, raising three daughters. She has experience on the Planning and Zoning Commission, working with neighborhood planning and various volunteer groups. She states her priorities are the opportunity for affordable housing in all parts of Urbandale, strengthening infrastructure, storm water management and flood mitigation. She wants to transcend school district boundaries and promote citizen involvement and cooperation to form a United Urbandale.



Mary Polson, Iyleene Lemon, Bridget Carberry Montgomery

This article is really not complete. As you will note in the “*Can You Solve the Mystery*” feature, we are left with two other ladies who appear to have served on the Council. Until we can learn more of their contributions, this is still an unfolding story.

---

Deb Mains, Historical Society member, retired as Urbandale City Clerk after 31 years. She recently responded to a request to compile a list of the dozens of citizens who have served on the City Council since the first Council was elected in 1917.

This was in response to a story of the role women may have played in Urbandale history. (The Nineteenth Amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote was ratified August 26, 1920. Thus, women were not eligible to vote for Urbandale's incorporation in 1917.)

At the Urbandale History Day celebration, Iyleene Lemon, who has been listed as the first woman to serve on the Urbandale City Council, had an opportunity to meet with newly elected Council woman, Bridget Carberry Montgomery. There was discussion that only four other women: Miriam Cline, Marilyn Kollmorgen, Susan Siebke and Mary Polson, had been elected to the council over the 100 years. When Deb was doing her research, she uncovered the names of two other women who briefly served on the Council in the very early years.

**MRS. VADA WILSON** served from April 1928 to January 1929. **MRS. J.M. WILLIAMSON** from 1929 to April 1930. Both of these names were listed in Mae Nelson's book *Listening and Learning* as TC (Town Council) and Homemaker. Mrs. Wilson appears in this list as Mrs. A.T. Wilson and Mrs. Williamson might have been Lizzie but no other information is given. Who were these ladies? They may have just been appointed to fill out a term. What was going on with the Council when they served? Do you have any information about them? Please send your thoughts to us at [urbandalehistory@gmail.com](mailto:urbandalehistory@gmail.com)

---

## Urbandale Historical Society Highlights 2010 2019

As we welcome the new decade, it would only be proper to look back on the past 10 years and reflect on the changes we have seen with the Urbandale Historical Society.

### Programs:

We have enjoyed presentations of a wide variety of topics over the past years, including: histories of Ankeny, Polk City, Windsor Heights, Methodist

Hospital, Mercy Hospital, National Banks in Iowa; businesses in Urbandale; Quilts from and about Urbandale, toilet paper, feed sack clothes, Japanese internment and life on the home front; patriotic stories and patriots; history of buttons, Buster Brown shoes, . These are just a very few of the topics of our programs over the past decade. In 2019 we instituted a change in the date and time of our programs. We now offer the membership program presentations on the second Sunday of each month at 2:00 pm at the Olmsted-Urban house. Please note that Easter and Mother's Day (April and May) might present conflicts, so watch the website of any date changes.

### Open House:

We have continued with our tradition of having Open Houses showcasing the Olmsted-Urban House and property throughout the various seasons. In the **Fall** we are decorated for Thanksgiving and the fall harvest theme. The Halloween 'Punch on the Porch' tradition from Mattie Urban has continued and seems to still be a hit with the neighborhood children. **Christmas** is our special time with the house decorated for the holidays, music and treats. In 2016 we hosted with UCAN the resurgence of the Urbandale Luminaries and Light-Up Urbandale with the Urbandale Christmas tree lighting.

### Ice Cream Social:

What better way to begin the festivities for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July than the Annual Urbandale Historical Society Ice Cream Social. It has grown larger every year. With the House and Barn open, music, delicious luscious pie, cake and of course, ice cream, it has become a favorite for the community.

### Trips:

For many years prior to this past decade the Historical Society has sponsored bus trips around Iowa to visit various historical and interesting sites. We have continued with these excursions. For the early part of the 2010s we offered two trips per year, Spring and Fall. In 2019 we had only a Fall trip. We would like to continue these but need people interested in participating.

### Acquisitions:

We have received many items in the past decade to fill the house with materials of interest and importance to the history of the period and Urbandale. Among the pieces received were: a wooden model of dairy wagon and larger piece of a replica of the Lamb dairy wagon (Joe Lamb), Kwik Cook pressure cooker (Luella Olmsted), section of railroad track from Urbandale

Coal Co. mine (Charles Fleming), Oliver office typewriter, RCA Victor Table radio, Victorian style sled (Richard and Ruth Carey) and Cedar Chest (Marilyn and Bob Kollmorgen). These are a very small sampling of the donations.

### Highlights though the years

#### 2010

- Abbie Gardner Quester's Group received a \$375 grant for display items in the bedroom
- Little Girl Tea Parties (11<sup>th</sup> Annual)
- Passing: Bob Dabreio (1981 Citizen of the Year, husband of Cynthia)

#### 2011

- Little Girl Tea Parties (12<sup>th</sup> annual)
- Leadership Urbandale Class of 2011 selected the Historical Society for their project.
- Bravo Cultural Enrichment Grant received (\$5,000).

#### 2012

- After multiple sealant applications the wood carving of the farmer and his dog had deteriorated and needed to be removed. The chainsaw artist, Gary Keenan, turned the wind damaged silver maple on the front lawn into a masterpiece in 2004.
- We celebrated the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a feature article.
- Passing of Howard Nelson (32 years as Volunteer fireman, 10 years Planning and Zoning Commission, 2 years on Board of Adjustment, 1978 Citizen of the Year), Norma Wilder, husband Barney died in 2007. Norma had worked for over 50 years in the Des Moines area as a pharmacist before she retired.



#### 2013

- Tea Parties (14<sup>th</sup> Annual)
- Alicia Manning from DMACC worked with Virginia Gee on research and cleaning of the Cave (root cellar) and added artificial vegetables, fruit, canning jars and burlap sacks for display.
- BRAVO Grant received and used for Electrical work to permit better lighting around the house.
- UCAN and DUNA sponsored meeting featuring Virginia Gee at the American Legion Hall to commemorate the meeting in Oct. 1912 at Hays General Store to discuss 'matter of importance'

ultimately leading to the formation of the School district and city of Urbandale.

- Passing of members Pat Avaux, Susan Clemmensen (with Urbandale Library 41 years), Marian Chase (Urbandale School Board) and Rosemary Michael

#### 2014

- Endow Urbandale, \$4,000 for memorial walkway and walkways around the house

#### 2015

- Barn Dedication for Wayne Robbins (Barn built in 2001, addition on N side added in 2007)
- Passing of members: Karolyn Hatch, Miriam Cline (Citizen of the Year-1985, first City Hostess for Urbandale Women’s Club, City Council 12 years), Lee Couch, (Citizen of Year-1999), Joy Puckett and Edna May Jacobs (she lived in Urbandale 91 years, 1941 UHS graduate. She traced back to the original McDivitt family)

#### 2016

- Opening of Urbandale’s Centennial Celebration
- Urbandale Historical Society 40<sup>th</sup> year
- Passing of members: Mary Looney, Wayne Robbins, Berneda Milligan, Madeline Kaloides, Marge Wittenbaugh and Truman Lewis

#### 2017

- Butterfly Garden Established with the Urbandale Garden Club
- Urbandale’s Centennial
- Historical society members assisted Mary Polson with a popular tour of the historic McDivitt Cemetery
- Radio Flyer Coaster wagon raffle
- BRAVO Grant Received: \$6750
- Naming of the Trolley Park for Bill Lawson
- Light up Urbandale, Luminaries and Christmas lighting
- Endow Urbandale Grant received - \$2000 (technology),
- Passing of member: Janice Winey



#### 2018

- Virginia Gee is writing about Urbandale history for the Urbandale Living Magazine
- Scanning of Urbandale HS Yearbooks to DVD
- Endow Urbandale Grant sidewalk repair

- Passing of member: Harry Pringnitz (with his wife June had donated a pump organ to the Society)

#### 2019

- Olmsted-Urban House Listed in National Register of Historic Places
- Olmsted School: Legacy Celebration in honor of its closing. The new school will retain the name Millard Olmsted Elementary school, Historical Society members were active in promoting retaining the name.
- Robert J. (Jim) Olmsted passed away at his home in Surprise, Arizona on August 13, 2019
- Developed a new webpage and e-mail address.

---

#### Delores Lewis

The Historical Society is sad to note the passing of another long-time dedicated member Delores Lewis. In addition to their support, she and her husband Truman who died in 2016, volunteered in a variety of ways over the years. Delores particularly enjoyed baking pies and helping serve at the annual Ice Cream Social.

Delores was active in the community as a charter member of Urbandale Lioness Club, helping with school activities, Band Boosters, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. She was especially known for her work with the Iowa Genealogical Society.

The Historical Society was honored to be designated by her family as a recipient of memorial funds in her name.

---

#### New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Society:

John & Kathy Niemann 7107 Monroe Ct Urbandale, IA 50322 515-689-0075	Ann Readinger 4210 132 <sup>nd</sup> Street Urbandale, IA 50323 515-577-8511
Pat & Jennifer Quigley 2006 Shrider Rd Colorado Springs, CO 80920 719-205-5226	Urbandale Alumni Association 7332 Dusk Dr. Johnston, IA, 50131

## Thank You Members

With the new fiscal year, it is time to renew your membership. Each of you is important to the continued success of the Urbandale Historical Society.

The designation of the Olmsted-Urban House to the National Register of Historic Places is a great honor but asks for even greater responsibility for the proper upkeep and maintenance of this historic building. Basic membership fees go toward the yearly budget expenses of utilities, insurance, lawn care, snow removal, computer work and office and kitchen supplies. We currently do not have any basic money-making events other than the traditional Ice Cream Social. We are fortunate in the past to have benefitted from grants from Bravo and Endow Urbandale for special projects and we will continue to apply when appropriate.

Some Society members in the past have chosen the category of sustaining member or Patron and this has been greatly appreciated. Keep in mind that any amount you can donate beyond your basic membership fee will help us meet our increasing expenses.

Another way you can help is to encourage other people you know to become members. We need not only increased funds, but volunteers to help with Society activities.

Thank you.

<b>URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL</b>		
Membership is on a calendar year: Jan. 1 to Dec. 31		
Contributions are tax deductible.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting: \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron: \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Name on permanent plaque: \$1,000 and
<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining: \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor: \$500 and up	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<i><u>Special Gifts – Memorials are appreciated</u></i>		
Name: _____	Spouse: _____	
Address: _____	Phone: _____	
City: _____	State: _____	Zip _____
e-mail: _____		
Please indicate your interests below:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Buildings/Grounds/House Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	
<input type="checkbox"/> House-keeping	<input type="checkbox"/> Gardening	
<input type="checkbox"/> Ice Cream Social	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership	
<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Programs	
<input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments	<input type="checkbox"/> Records/Office work	
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Projects / Events	<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration / Acquisitions	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tour Guides	<input type="checkbox"/> Trips	
<input type="checkbox"/> History (Collecting, Preserving)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other talents (please specify on back))	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have Urbandale information, photographs or memorabilia to donate or lend for copying.		
Send Completed form to: URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 4010 70 <sup>th</sup> Street Urbandale, IA 50322-2616		

---

**Urbandale Historical Society**  
**4010 70<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Urbandale, IA 50322**