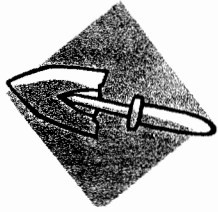


URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

4010 70TH STREET
URBANDALE, IA 50322
(515) 270-2917
www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org
SPRING 2013



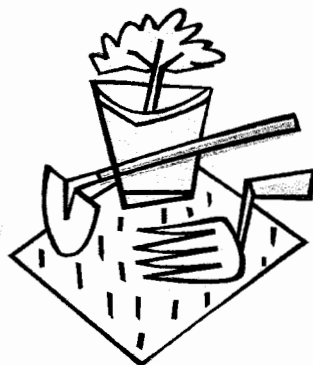
Plant Sale

Don't miss the Plant Sale on Saturday, May 4th from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on the lawn of the Olmsted-Urban House.

Calling all gardeners! Invite 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.

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.

If questions, call Anne Ulm, plant sale chairperson, at 276-1568. A special thanks to Anne and her plant sale volunteers!



Volunteers Needed

There are so many ways you can be of help to the Historical Society. If you have thought about volunteering but have not been contacted, please call a board member or committee chairperson. We need many people to keep the organization's projects going. We also need new Board members. Consider how you can help!

Board of Directors

President - Wayne Robbins	276-1370
Vice President & Membership Norm & Faith Huitt	276-1443
Past President - Madeline Kaloides	276-2041
Secretary - Kay Readinger	276-2017
Treasurer - Joanne Robbins	276-1370
Programs - Bob Simon	276-2478
Local History - Virginia Gee Janice Winey	276-0222 276-2752
Buildings & Grounds - Wayne Robbins Norm Huitt	276-1370 276-1443
Publicity - Cynthia Dabrieo	331-0494
Restoration & Acquisitions Beth Haigh	276-9654
Special Projects Ginny Campbell Joanne Hanson	276-4168 276-7147

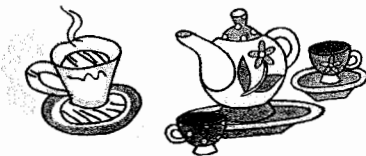
"A Celebration of Little Girls"

The committee has begun planning for the June tea parties. The dates for the tea parties will be June 3, 5 and 7. Our 14th annual tea party will include lunch, crafts, a featured book, music, and manners matter.

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

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

If you would like to help serve on this committee or help during the week of the tea parties, please contact Beth Haigh at 276-9654.



Spring Bus Tour

May 14th

7:00 a.m. Departure

Many central Iowans travel north on Interstate 35 or Highway 69 on their way to Minnesota. Have you ever swung west into Winnebago County to Forest City? First settled in the 1880's the community now has a four-year liberal arts college, a recreational facility, historical center, and the world's largest motor home manufacturing complex.

This is the destination for what will be the 40th tour sponsored by the Urbandale Historical Society on Tuesday, May 14th. The bus will leave from the Olmsted-Urban House parking lot at 4010 70th Street at 7:00 am. The first stop will be the Winnebago Welcome Center.

Since 1958 Winnebago Industries of Iowa has been making it possible for hundreds of Americans to hit the open road and do it in style and comfort. The company started by building travel trailers but in 1966 introduced their first motor home. The company will provide a tour of the manufacturing facility from the saw mill and cabinet shop, to the metal stamping line and also view the latest finished models. We will then be served a special lunch as we visit Waldorf College.

In the afternoon we'll go to The Mansion, built in 1900 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Winnebago Historical Society has prepared exhibits which include early Americana items, fashions, toys, and tools. Of special interest is the Ida Fuller collection. She was a local girl who became famous as a dancer and choreographer during the first decade of the 20th century. Many of her costumes are on display. Also included is the Leibrand Wheis Historical Center.

Trip coordinator Wayne Robbins promises that a final stop will be a sweet treat before departing for home.

The tour is open to everyone, so encourage your friends to come along. A check for \$70 sent to the Urbandale Historical Society will hold your place and includes all charges. Please enclose an emergency contact name and phone number with your check. Mark "Bus Tour" on the envelope. Call Wayne Robbins at 276-1370 for more information.

remains stored in urns. The space and engraving identifying the deceased first went on sale May 2008 at a cost of \$1,000 each for Urbandale residents. Purchasers must agree to the terms and restrictions set forth by the City of Urbandale. Complete information can be obtained from the Parks and Recreation office at 278-3963 or go the city's website.

Olmsteds in the Cemetery

When you visit a cemetery it's interesting to look at the family names on some of the other stones. Because the Olmsted-Urban House is the home of the Urbandale Historical Society, more information is known about the Olmsted family.

Leander and Charlotte came from New York in the late 1860's to farm in Polk County. They eventually built the current house in 1904. Their son Millard married Olive Stuart and they also lived in the house. Their grave stones are easily visible in the McDivitt Cemetery. They are ancestors of Virginia {Ginny} Olmsted Campbell, a long-time Urbandale resident and Historical Society board member. She has worked with the family's genealogical records and has kept in touch with family members who live out of state, but are still interested in the Olmsted-Urban House.

But there are other family stories represented by Olmsted cemetery markers. Ambrose, Leander's older brother, came to farm in Webster Township in 1871. He and his wife, Sarah, and some of their family members are also buried at McDivitt. Norman Altemeier, an Urbandale resident, is a descendent of this line. There are records of at least 15 Olmsted family members buried at McDivitt.

Search for Yearbooks

As reported in the last issue of the newsletter, the Historical Society is trying to acquire a complete collection of the nearly 60 Urbandale High School yearbooks from 1954.

The topic generated quite a bit of interest appearing first on the City of Urbandale website under "What's New". Jessica Daley, photojournalist with WOI ABC 5, thought it was interesting and called Virginia Gee for more information. She interviewed and filmed Virginia at the Olmsted-Urban House and a segment appeared on the Channel 5 newscast that evening. A viewer called Virginia the next day and offered her 1987 yearbook.

Next came a call from the secretary at the high school. They had found a duplicate of one of the items needed, as well as the one most recently published. A missing edition had also been obtained as a duplicate from the Urbandale Public Library.

Virginia was also contacted by Tiffany DeMasters, a reporter for the Urbandale section of the Des Moines Register. An informative article appeared March 5th, again giving a positive view of our project, generating several inquiries.

After all this publicity we now only lack Volume 40 (for the graduating class of 1993). We have hopes that this volume can eventually be added.

The yearbooks provide an interesting panorama of Urbandale history. They are kept in the history room at the Olmsted-Urban House. If you are interested in viewing them, come to an Open House or call for a special appointment.

History of McDivitt Grove Cemetery

One of the most historic sites in Urbandale is the McDivitt Cemetery on Meredith Drive.

William McDivitt came to settle in Webster Township in 1853. When his son, John, died in 1865, the father set apart an acre of his farm land for a cemetery. His wife, Sarah, died and was buried there in 1868. Ground was officially deeded for cemetery purposes in 1870.

In 1875 a Methodist Church was built just west of the cemetery. Lumber from a nearby saw mill was used. The church was the site of much of the community's social life. In it were held weddings, funerals, christenings, and church parties. Summer picnics were held on the grounds.

The furnishings inside were plain, with pews made of walnut. A small coal stove provided some heat for the church in the winter months. In 1878 a fine bell was hung in the church belfry. Services at the church for the primarily Methodist congregation were held with some regularity through 1928.

The Church of the Open Bible leased the church for some time and later purchased most of the pews for a church they were building at 68th Street in Urbandale. The bell was hung in the belfry of the United Church of Christ. The building was bought and lumber salvaged by Eldon Clements in 1950.

Meanwhile the cemetery continued to be operated by Webster Township trustees and maintained by a caretaker who kept burial records; though the existing records of the early days are incomplete. Much of the community's early history is

commemorated in the cemetery. In addition to McDivitt, other names on some of the older stones are Michael, Milligan, Hoskins, Hippee, Witmer, Clements, Olmsted, Parmenter, Stuart, and Flynn.

Some of the monuments are tall and slender with names, dates, and one line epitaphs such as "gone but not forgotten" and "at rest" are still clearly legible. Angels, harps, Bibles, anchors, and clasped hands are carved into some of the stones. Other graves are marked only by limestone rock; and some gravestones are so worn by time and weather, that names and dates are hardly legible.

The entrance at 70th and Meredith was marked by a metal iron sign and iron gates. Gravel drives separated the cemetery into three areas - South, Center, and North.

A record of grave sites was first prepared by DAR in 1932. In 1978 an inventory was prepared as an Eagle Scout project by David Brush, son of Don and Kathryn Brush. A DAR record with an alphabetical listing of family names was later completed in November 1988. The city of Urbandale took over maintenance of the McDivitt Grove Cemetery from the Webster Township trustees in April 1998. The cemetery is about three acres in size. An area west of the entrance drive, where the church once stood, was made available, but by 2002 all additional plots there had been sold.

Because residents expressed that "they've lived in Urbandale their whole lives and they wanted to be buried in Urbandale" another option has been developed. Two columbarium have been installed in the cemetery. They are granite walls each containing 48 niches or recessed compartments designed to hold cremated



Urbandale Living Preserving Urbandale's History

The April issue of Urbandale Living featured an article on the origin of some of the street names and places in Urbandale. Author, Michael Swanger first contacted Jan Herke of Parks and recreation and then Paul Dekker of Community Development. Michael Swanger came to the Olmsted Urban House for information and pictures.

Many of the facts about street names came as a result of the research done by Bob Simon in 1999 when he presented and taped a program and gleaned input from society members. This is an example of how important it is for the Historical Society to obtain and preserve information and photographs for use by other groups or for publications.

We need you to help us add to our collection of pictures of people and places, small memorabilia and articles pertaining to Urbandale's history. Items can be photocopied and returned. Please mention our need to your neighbors or anyone downsizing their home. We want to assure that these artifacts will not be lost.

Wonderful April Program

Laura Poresky presented an outstanding program as she modeled garments that would have been worn by women in the 1860's. She was originally scheduled for the March program, but the meeting was cancelled because of the weather forecast. The program originally planned for April on the history of businesses along 70th and Douglas will be presented this fall so be thinking of memories you can share.

Hazel Demirjean's Address

Hazel Demirjean, one of the original members of the Historical Society, sold her home on Maryland Drive and moved to Conrad, Iowa to be near family. She would welcome hearing from her old Urbandale friends and sharing memories of Urbandale. Her address is P.O. Box# 808 Conrad, IA 50621. Phone 515-205-9850

*Make new friends, but keep the
old, For one is silver and the other gold!*

Save the Date

What: Annual Ice Cream Social

When: Sunday, June 30 2:00 – 4:00

Where: Front Lawn of the Olmsted-Urban House

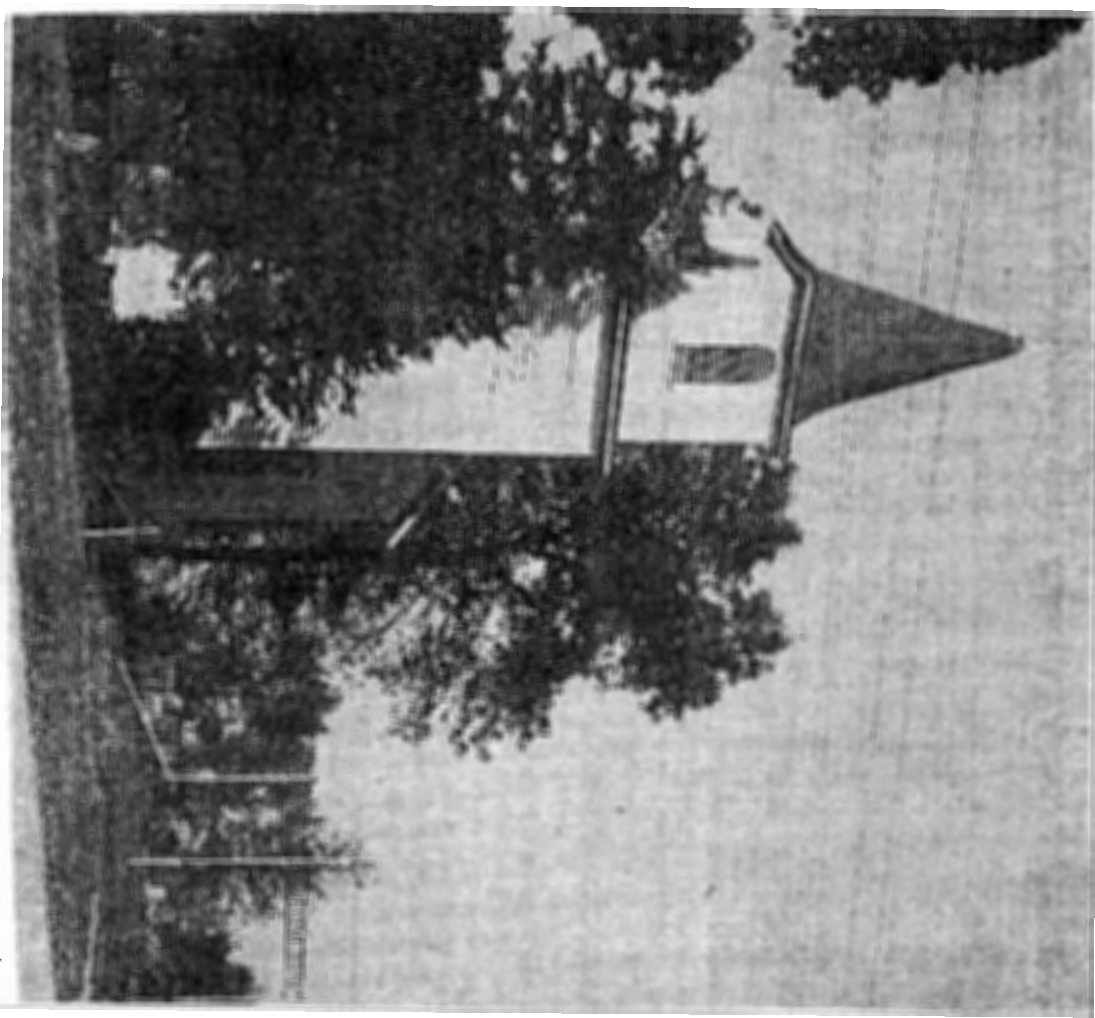
Homemade ice cream, pies and cakes will be available. Vintage automobiles will be on display and the house and barn will be open for tours.



Clip and Save Important Dates

May 4	Plant Sale
May 14	Spring Bus Trip
June 3, 5, 7	Tea Parties
June 30	Ice Cream Social

Urbandale Historical Society
4010 70th Street
Urbandale, IA 50322



MCDIVITT GROVE CHURCH AND CEMETERY

Church built in 1875. Dismantled in 1950.
First burial at this location in 1865.
Cemetery now under the administration
of Urbandale Parks and Recreation.