

# Urbandale Historical Society Newsletter

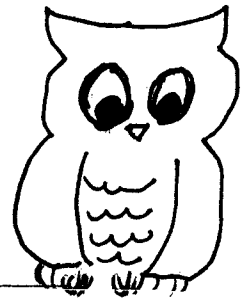
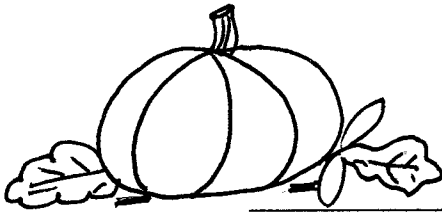
4010 70<sup>th</sup> Street

Urbandale, IA 50322

(515) 270-2917

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

Fall 2016



## Fall Programs

Fall program meetings have been announced by program coordinator Bob Simon.

The season opens at the Olmsted-Urban House with the traditional pot-luck dinner on **Monday, September 12th** at 6:00 p.m. Bring some food to share and your own table service.

If you choose not to come for the meal, please join us at 7:00 for an interesting program. Robert and Joyce Berkenes will give us a look into the lives of the settlers in the 1800's as revealed in their journals and diaries. A comparison of the documents reveal a variety of concerns.

Family Entertainment in Urbandale is the topic for the discussion meeting on **Monday, October 3rd**. Come at 7:00 p.m. and share your experiences. What do you remember about hanging out at the drugstore, the roller rink, Urban Theatre, basketball games in the old gym, dances, the drag strip, your family's first TV set and other recreational activities? Encourage your friends to join you for this event.

Ginny and Jerry Campbell will serve refreshments.

Another entertaining and informative program is planned for **Monday, November 7th** at 7:00 p.m. Brian Bopp will present in character the life of John Bradford of the Plymouth Colony in early America. Brian presented a program last year - a colorful depiction of the military heroes. Jo Henry will provide refreshments.

You do not have to be a member of the Urbandale Historical Society or an Urbandale resident to attend these meetings. Everyone is welcome!

## Open House Fall/ Christmas Holiday Calling all area residents!

Fall Open House for the Urbandale Historical Society is planned for **Sunday, October 2nd** between 2:00-4:00 p.m. This is your chance to tour the Olmsted-Urban House and the Wayne Robbins Barn; and see new acquisitions, look at the historic city maps, and ask questions about Urbandale's history. Join your friends for fellowship and refreshments.

A special highlight of the year is the Holiday Open House that is scheduled for **Sunday, December 4th** from 2:00-4:00 p.m. All the rooms in the Olmsted-Urban House will be decorated. There will be music and refreshments. A number of old-time books and toys have been added to our collection. Bring your friends!

## Fall Bus Trip

The 47th Bus Trip for the Urbandale Historical Society is being planned for **Tuesday, October 11th.** Specific details will be available at the meeting on September 12th when sign-up can begin. Bob Simon with the help of Pat Finnerty is planning a day long trip with several interesting stops.

Previous trip takers will receive a notice in the mail from Janice Winey and can mail in their reservation. Watch for more information!

## Centennial Fans

Urbandale's official centennial observance began July 2nd with the community picnic at Walker Johnson Park. Community groups were encouraged to provide an informative display about their organization. Kay Readinger and Beth Haigh represented the Historical Society with a display board of interesting facts. The theme "Be a Fan" was highlighted by the distribution of paper fans with the slogan "Our History Great Stories, Cool Stuff" The fans, with a picture of the Olmsted-Urban House, were first given out at the Ice Cream Social in June.

## Punch on the Porch

Urbandale has officially designated **Sunday, October 30th** as Beggars Night. The "Punch on the Porch" tradition will be observed at the Olmsted-Urban House from 6:00-8:00 p.m. Janice Winey, Kay Readinger and other helpers will welcome visitors to the porch with a cup of orange punch, following a long tradition.

## A Big Thanks for the Ice Cream Social Volunteers

The annual Ice Cream Social was again a great success, thanks to our community support. Many members and friends donated pies and other dessert items. Tom Foster and his wife Patti worked for hours with President Norm Huitt to freeze the many gallons of ice cream needed. Many volunteers helped with serving and clean up.

Special thanks to FAREWAY FOOD STORES, HY-VEE, HILAND DAIRY, and QUIK TRIP for their generous donations.

The Ice Cream Social has not only become a significant community event, but serves as an important fund raiser for the Urbandale Historical Society. Next year the event is already being planned for June 25th!

## House Upkeep

Like any home, the Olmsted-Urban House needs upkeep. Thanks to the following members for their work in cleaning and getting the house ready for fall events: Kathryn Brush, Ginny Campbell, Cynthia Dabrieo, Beth Haigh, Pat Nawrocki, and Kay Readinger.

Outside, Maxine Edwards and Virginia Gee have worked in the gardens. A water spigot has been added to the west side to help in watering new plantings. New gray metal doors have replaced the doors to the cave and the outside entrance to the basement.

## **Urbandale Centennial - Historical Society 40 Years**

Urbandale is celebrating its Centennial with a variety of events leading up to July 4th, 2017. As part of the observance, organizations were encouraged to provide a summary of their history in the community, and plans for the future. The materials will be archived and plans for publishing a book about the community is pending.

This is also an important milestone for the Urbandale Historical Society as we celebrate our founding 40 years ago. Virginia Gee has gone through the historian's books to prepare this record of our history.

### **History of the Urbandale Historical Society**

Our motto "Preserving yesterday and today for tomorrow" - is the purpose for the Urbandale Historical Society, a local organization of importance to the entire community.

More than 40 years ago, a small group of residents met informally to discuss how materials and information about the city might be preserved. By 1976 the group was chartered, had by-laws and officers, and was looking for a permanent location. Their initial goal was to collect, preserve, and maintain historical memorabilia of Urbandale for the purpose of education and information.

Meetings were first held at Urbandale Congregational Church or the Urbandale Public Library, and later at the Heritage Room at Olmsted Elementary School.

Serving as presidents during the early years were Larry Hindert, Edwin Spiller, Robert Lamb, and David Hartsook. The acquisition of historical materials was led by Mae Nelson and Hazel Demirjean.

When the space at Olmsted was needed for classes, the Historical Society looked for another site. A proposal was even made to build a replica of Urbandale's original two-room school house to be located in one of the city parks.

Meanwhile a survey showed the best choice for the headquarters would be the old Urban house at 70th Street and Airline. This was originally a four-square farm home built by the Olmsted family in 1904 on their 80 acre farm. Some members of their family lived in the house until 1937, when it was sold to the Gutfreunds who did some remodeling and modernizing of the interior. In 1949 the house was sold to Karl and Matie Urban who lived there with their son, John, for many years.

In 1987 the property was made available for purchase. Historical Society President, Madeline Kaloides, worked diligently with John Urban, the Historical Society Finance Committee, various city officials, outside donors, and the City Council with the prospect of using Hotel / Motel tax funds. A contract was finalized to purchase the property.

The house was structurally sound, but city regulations required foundation repair, redoing the entire electrical system, making the house handicap accessible, and providing a new paved parking lot. Renovations of the interior would take place over many years with the work of special committees, many volunteers, and several Questers groups.

Additional money came from special donations, grants from Bravo, and designated fund raising over the years. Most of the basic operating, maintenance, and insurance costs have been met by paid memberships and seasonal fund raising activities such as plant sales, tea parties, antique classes, bus trips, and the ice cream social.

The purchase agreement for the property stipulated that the Urban name would be retained. Because the Olmsted family name had significance to the town's history, the building would be officially known as the Olmsted-Urban House.

The Historical Society finally had a headquarters, a place to house and make available historical information and memorabilia. Filing cabinets were obtained, shelving planned to display artifacts, reference materials arranged, and years of clipping and photographs could be organized in notebooks by subject matter.

In addition, furnishing and decor for the house were selected and arranged to help depict for school children, youth groups, and other visitors a sense of what family life was like in the home in Urbandale in the 1920's and 1930's.

This was also a place to hold a variety of special activities and program meetings all open to the public. Topics presented have been related to Urbandale and Polk County history, development of city departments and services, members' personal collections of antiques and collectibles, and the sharing of memories of growing up in Urbandale.

Many of these informative historical topics have been recorded for reference in

newsletters for members, first edited by long-time President, Madeline Kaloides, and later by Virginia Gee. (Copies are in the reference file at the Urbandale Public Library). Starting with the issue of the Fall of 2010, the newsletters have been posted on the website of the Urbandale Historical Society.

In 1991 planning began for an authentic style barn to be build approximately where the original barn stood on the Olmsted farm. Architects' drawings were obtained and fund raising began. Finally, in 2001 the barn was completed and farm tools and artifacts could be displayed. In 2007 an addition was build on the north side to hold more displays related to farm life and Urbandale history. In 2015 the barn was dedicated to long-time President, Wayne Robbins, for his years of work on Buildings and Grounds, leadership in getting the barn build, and donating many farm items for display.

Another important part of the Historical Society's tradition is the brick sidewalk - A Walk of History. Persons can order a brick honoring an individual, family group, organization, or event that represents some part of Urbandale's history. The bricks in the sidewalk leading up to the front porch of the Olmsted-Urban House provide many interesting facts about the city and the people who have lived here.

There are other ways community members have become involved. Through the decades many individuals have served as Officers or members of the Board of Directors, special committees, and work projects. All are volunteers. One of the most popular events involving the whole community since 1994, has been the traditional Ice Cream Social that

is held the last Sunday in June. In addition, to homemade ice cream, people enjoy visiting with friends, listening to music, and viewing the displays in the House and Barn.

Another tradition is the day long bus trip planned for May and October each year. Forty-six trips have been taken over the years to various historical locations in Iowa. Persons do not have to be members of the Historical Society to participate.

The Olmsted-Urban House is open for visitors at "Open House" events, special activities, or by appointment. Persons having questions about Urbandale history can look for answers in the materials organized in the office/library. The collection includes maps, newspaper clippings, vintage magazines of the 20's and 30's, books related to the period, and a collection of Urbandale High School yearbooks.

Persons are always encouraged to make available photos and printed materials their family may have, that would add to our historical records. Copies can be made, and the originals returned.

Although the initial goal of the Historical Society was to obtain and maintain materials related to Urbandale history has continued, the purchase of the Olmsted-Urban House and the building of the barn added new challenges.

A current goal is to catalog materials, acquisitions, and to store data electronically in a more permanent manner.

Future goals are to continue historical research, prepare more educational displays in the barn, complete major

maintenance projects for the upkeep of the property, and increase long-range fund raising efforts. To meet these specific goals, there is a need to encourage greater community involvement and support, and increase donations and paid memberships.

To contact the Urbandale Historical Society headquarters at the Olmsted-Urban House at 4010 70th Street, please call 515-270-2017.

To email use:

[info@urbandalehistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@urbandalehistoricalsociety.org)

To learn more about the Urbandale Historical Society, events, membership, brick orders, volunteer opportunities, and city history - consult the website at: [www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org)

Clip and Save

## Important Dates

---

**September 12th - Potluck Supper  
(6:00) & Program (7:00)**

**October 2nd - Fall Open House and  
Barn Display 2-4 pm**

**October 3rd - Program Meeting 7pm**

**October 11th - Fall Bus Trip 7 am**

**October 30th - Punch on the Porch**

**November 7th - Program meeting  
7pm**

**December 4th - Holiday Open House  
2-4pm**

---