



# URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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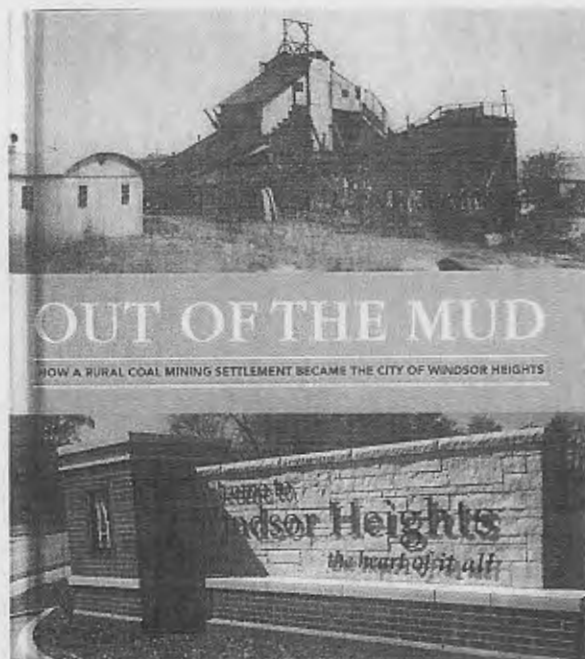


## Winter 2018

### Programs 2018

For many early years, Urbandale's neighbor to the south in Walnut Township was composed of farmland, small housing developments, and coal mines. Gradual dissatisfaction with the services offered by Polk County and Des Moines brought a move to incorporate in 1941. The final vote was 300 in favor and 222 against. Though controversy existed, the community of Windsor Heights was established.

George Hansua presented a program on the development of the community at the Historical Society meeting **January 8**. A retired Lutheran pastor, he has been a resident of Windsor Heights for 40 years. He has been active in civic affairs and collected information and photographs to be published in a book "*Out of the Mud - How a Rural Coal Mining Settlement Became the City of Windsor Heights.*"



For those interested, the traditional soup supper preceded the meeting. Don and Katherine Brush prepared the basic soup stock with other members bringing vegetables. Wayne and Gloria Anderson assisted in the preparation and serving.

**February 5** will bring another in the series of programs presented by avid collector, Ed Morrow. February's topic will focus on unique lighting and related advertisements, particularly night lights. The program will begin at 7 p.m. Invite a friend to join you. Refreshments will follow.

Robert's Ramblings will be the subject for the meeting **March 5** at 7 p.m. Bob Simon is a long-time Urbandale resident and member of the Historical Society. He has also done volunteer research in newspapers at the State Historical Library. He has unearthed a variety of Unique stories about happenings in Urbandale. He has presented programs for the Downtown Neighborhood Association and the American Legion. You won't want to miss this event.

### Meeting cancellations

Iowa's unpredictable weather sometimes causes a meeting to be cancelled. If it is announced that local schools are closing and other community events are being cancelled, you can assume that the Historical Society will not be meeting. Sometimes the weather conditions change during the day. The answering machine message may not reflect this. President Norm Huitt will make the decision if a meeting will be cancelled. Call his home (276-1443) or Virginia Gee (276-0222) if you have questions. In most cases the program will not be changed to another Monday but moved to the following month.



### Valentine Open House

The sharing of Valentines was a common tradition in the past. The Historical Society has acquired several collections of Valentines of past decades originally belonging to Matie Evans -- Urban, Mae Nelson, Howard Nelson, John Urban and Madeline Kaloides. They will be on display at a special Open House at the Olmsted-Urban House **Sunday, February 4, 2-4p.m.** This would be a great opportunity to bring a child, grandchild or friend to take a leisurely look at the rooms and Urbandale

memorabilia when there is not a crowd. If the weather is questionable call Virginia Gee (276-0222) to see if the event is being held.



### Christmas Open House

The Official Urbandale Christmas season was launched Sunday December 3 with our Annual Christmas Open House. UCAN sponsored a number of festivities surrounding our event with the Lions Club, Kiwanis and several other community groups assisting. We collected Toys for Tots to help make Christmas special. Santa made an appearance along with a couple of his reindeer.



The House was decorated for the season with a doll display, the Christmas tree with an electric trolley surrounding it and a plethora of toys to delight the children in all of us. The Barn was decorated with lights and our wagon was pulled out and decorated for photo opportunities along with a beautiful Christmas tree.



Christmas melodies wafted through the air and the event was capped with the official tree lighting by Urbandale's Citizen of the Year, Betty Devine. Of course, there were plenty of Christmas goodies for all to enjoy.



## Recap of 2017

We were involved in the Urbandale Centennial by building a theme-float for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. You may have seen some of us sporting red T-shirts and pulling Radio Flyer wagons to advertise our group with the float, giving out candy. We contacted the Radio Flyer Company, which was also celebrating their 100-year anniversary. They provided us with two special wagons which we used as a fundraiser raffle.

This was the second year of **Light Up Urbandale**, which we co-host with U-CAN. Over 400 people came to the house on December 3rd for tours, outside crafts, Santa and live reindeer, and family photos in front of the farm wagon, decorated for Christmas.

Our Ice Cream Social, always held on the last Sunday in June, was a great success, with more than 375 people enjoying the ice cream and pie. The weather was ideal for the popular event.

Other notable events included: hosting the Urbandale Garden Club Plant Sale and creating a butterfly garden with that group, having monthly topical programs, a soup supper in January, and working with Urbandale High School Alumni Association to scan photos and prepare a DVD of school activities over the years. There was ongoing maintenance of the house, barn, and property. The BRAVO grant we received was used to remove three diseased and old trees as well as to provide ongoing treatment of trees for emerald ash borer.

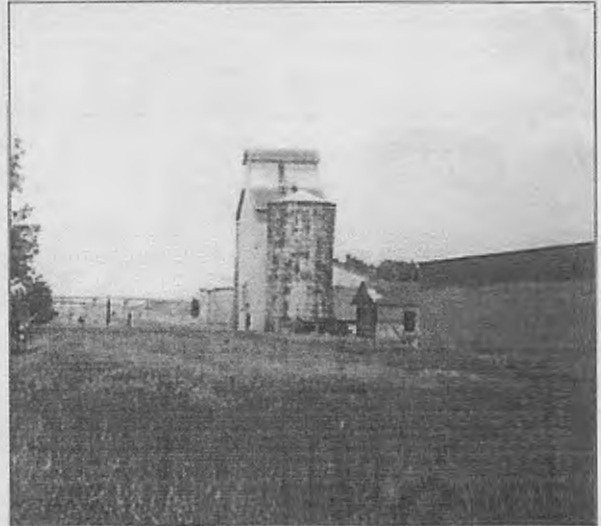
One project the Board recently approved was to pursue Historic National Registry status for the Olmsted-Urban House. We are working with an historian to research and apply for that designation, which would be the only one in Urbandale.

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## Rider Corner

In November the Historical Society received an e-mail from Tammy Pearson, a new editor of the Iowa Living Magazines of which *Urbandale Living* is delivered to us locally. She asked if we might like to provide a "history" article in the monthly publication on some aspect of local history and/or information about upcoming events. We are happy to have this opportunity. The first article about the Christmas Open House at the Olmsted-Urban House, U-CAN activities

and some past holiday events appeared in the December issue. The next article submitted was to answer in part the frequently asked question - "What is Rider Corner?". The topic has received additional coverage with actions of the Iowa Department of Transportation and the City of Urbandale to establish the new Urban Loop in that area.



Here is some background information regarding the history of Rider Corner

Local morning traffic report... "There is a slow down again at Rider Corner. Traffic backed up on Highway 141 and access to I35-80."

This has been a common occurrence supported by statistics from the Iowa Department of Transportation which identified in one report the location as one of the worst bottlenecks in the metro area.

Urbandale City Officials announced last fall some new changes to deal with the infamous traffic slowdown at this junction of Urbandale, Johnston and Grimes. The Iowa DOT approved plans to build a flyover ramp from northbound I35-80 to Highway 141, to extend the southbound ramp from Highway 141 to I35-80 and a new interchange at Meredith Drive.

Planning has been in the works for years and it is hoped some of the actual construction will be completed in 2018. It was nearly 60 years ago that I 35-80 crossed through the Polk county farm land with a turn to the east in the Urbandale area. Now with the improvements comes new planning for what is to be known as the Urban Loop. This is designated as a new development area that not only improves traffic control but increases access to new retail, office, warehouse

and light industrial space.

But what is the story behind the familiar Rider Corner? Early maps of Webster Township show a small community located on the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad line about three miles west of McDivitt Grove Cemetery on Meredith Drive. Various references are made to Ryder, Rider and Rider Corner. A spot in the "grocery store" opened in 1900 as a post office and closed in 1905. In addition to the train depot at some time there were two stores a creamery and a grain elevator. A 1923 Rand McNally map showed Rider then had a population of 12.

It was never much of a town, but because of its location on the railroad it served an important role for local farmers who brought their grain to the elevator. At one point the Rider Cooperative coal mine was operated in the area. In later years all that remained beside the railroad track were a silo and the elevator.

In more recent times the site on the north side of Meredith was used by Pallet Recycling of Iowa. To local travelers all that remains of Rider Corner now is the name. As major improvements are made, local officials and developers will continue to promote the I35-80 corridor as the new Urban Loop.

**Clip and Save - (Upcoming Events)**

February 4	Valentine Open House	2 - 4:00 pm
February 5	Program Meeting	7:00 pm
February 19	Board Meeting	7:00 pm
March 5	Program Meeting	7:00 pm
March 19	Board Meeting	7:00 pm
April 2	Program Meeting	7:00 pm
April 16	Board Meeting Election of Officers	7:00 pm
May 21	Board Meeting	7:00 pm
June 24	Ice Cream Social	2 - 4:00 pm

**New Members of Board**

**Carol Lee Riekenberg** and her husband Warren have been members of the Historical Society for many years. Carol Lee is especially known for her work in the upstairs "toy room" at the Olmsted-Urban House. She has arranged displays, served as the greeter hostess and even brought items from her personal collection for the Holiday Open House. Carol Lee also takes

photos at the various events and has prepared special books for reference. She will assist Ginny Campbell with special projects and events.

**Meribeth Haynes** is one of our newer members. She has taken a leadership role with the Urbandale High School Alumni Association and was particularly active during the year-long Urbandale Centennial observance. She will work with Virginia Gee in the area of local history and some of the technology involved with preservation of materials.

We welcome these volunteers. There are many ways you can help the Historical Society. Consider some area you are interested in and get involved.

**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.

