

URBANDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

4010 70TH STREET

URBANDALE, IA 50322

(515) 270-2917

www.urbandalehistoricalsociety.org

FALL 2013

September Meeting

Monday, September 9th

6:00 Pot Luck

7:00 Program



The pot luck will begin at 6:00. Please bring your table service and a dish to share.

The program will be given by Bob Simon and Beth Haigh on "Autograph Books and Diaries, a Glimpse into the Past". Please bring any autograph books or diaries that you may have and recollections to share with the group. Thank You!

Open Houses

Periodically we get calls... "When is the Olmsted-Urban House open?" Because board members are all volunteers, we do not have weekday open houses except by appointment.

You are welcome to come and visit Sunday, October 6 anytime from 2:00-4:00 p.m. The barn will also be open and you can see changes we have done to the cave. This will also give you more time to come and look at some period items in the kitchen and ask questions about maps and photographs located in the office. Someone will also have the house open November 3rd!

Plan now to join us for the Holiday Open House which will be held December 8, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Come and share in the beautiful decorations, music, refreshments and fellowship. Bring friends and family!

October Meeting

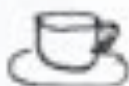
Monday, October 7th

WPA (Work Progress Administration) Murals will be the topic of the program scheduled for October 7th. Leigha DeLay will give examples of the art work done by certain artists in the 1930's, especially ones featured in post offices.

Cynthia Dabrieo will be hostess and serve dessert.



Punch on the Porch



With October comes the scheduled Beggars Night, October 30th. Following tradition, several of the Historical Society members will be on the south porch of the Olmsted-Urban House to welcome visitors with a cup of orange punch starting at 6 p.m. It's fun to hear the jokes and riddles (sometimes with a little prompting) and comment on the varied costumes. This is following a tradition of Maytie Urban, who during the years she lived at the house hosted the neighborhood children. Come and experience this custom with your children!

Fall Bus Trip

The 2013 fall bus trip will head to east Central Iowa on Tuesday, October 8th. We'll take I-80 east to Kinze Manufacturing near Williamsburg. With Jon Kinzenbau, the business has grown from a small welding shop to one of the largest specialty manufacturers in North America. The company is a technology leader and innovator of farm equipment including row crop planters and grain auger carts. The museum has many samples of how technology has changed and its influence on Iowa agriculture.

Then the group will continue on to Cedar Rapids and the 19th century mansion, Brucemore. The 26 acre park-like property features gardens, ponds and beautiful grounds. With a guided tour we will learn about the elegant furnishings and the three families who lived there since it was built in 1881.

Next, we will go down near the Cedar River to the Czech Village for lunch. We will see how this area is still rebuilding from the disastrous flood of 2008. After lunch the bus will take us to our final stop, the newly re-opened National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library.

A short film shows how the museum was relocated to higher ground following the flood. In addition to displays of Czech history, there are examples of costumes, glassware, and possessions brought by immigrant families. A highlight, just through October, is a traveling display of pins worn by former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright. With each jeweled pin is a written description of how it was related to diplomatic history.

The bus will load in the parking lot of the Olmsted-Urban House 4010 70th Street and leave at 7:00 a.m. A check for \$70

mailed to the Urbandale Historical Society will hold your place. Please mark Bus Tour on the envelope and enclose an emergency name and phone # with your check. Call 276-2762 or 276-1370 for more information. Trip coordinators Wayne Robbins and Bob Simon say we should be back from the trip about 5:30 p.m.

November Meeting

Monday, November 4th

At the November 4th meeting we will hear about the history of Polk City and the work of the Big Creek Historical Society. The program will be presented by Collette Huertz. It is always a pleasure to have guests from other area historical societies and learn about their activities and history!

Jerry and Ginny Campbell will serve dessert after the meeting.

A Big Thanks for the Ice Cream Social Volunteers

Sunday, June 30th was the date of the Urbandale Historical Society Ice Cream Social. It was a very successful event and well attended. A big thanks to all who volunteered and helped in so many ways. The house and barn tour guides reported a great response to the open house and answered numerous questions during the two hours.

Special thanks to Hiland Dairy for donations of milk and cream. Also thanks to Quik Trip, HyVee, and Fareway for their generous donations.



Little Girls' Tea Parties

The 14th annual tea party had a Victorian theme! The committee members included, Kay Readinger, Jan Page, Penny Le Fevre, Ginny Campbell, Cynthia Dabrieo, Char Opdahl, Mona Carver, Pat Nawrocki and Beth Haigh. A big thanks to them for giving their time and talent! Our featured book was The Very Real Princess by Julie Andrews. Cheryl Reagan, former Urbandale music teacher, played several songs from popular movies on the piano. She talked to the girls about taking piano lessons and the lifelong enjoyment playing the piano has given her. She also explained that the piano would have been used to entertain guests during Victorian parties. The crafts were folded lace fans and hats decorated with flowers, feathers and lace. Manners Matter was a highlight when each girl received a flower and Char Opdahl told about the language of flowers. In pairs they then answered a manners question and placed their posy in a beautiful Tessie Mussie. Beth Haigh gave a Victorian talk and showed items from that period. It was a fun filled two days!

Cooperation

One of the responsibilities and challenges of the Historical Society is to cooperate and provide information to other groups and individuals.

The Historical Society has a close working relationship with the Urbandale Library. The Reference Department and the Historical Society in recent months have exchanged duplicate copies of the yearbooks of Urbandale High School to make both collections more complete. The Historical Society still lacks only volume 40 for the year 1993.

(Not in this issue)

Enclosed in this newsletter is a copy of the schedule of programs and activities of the 1900's period at the Urbandale Public Library from September 7th - 14th. We are happy to help publicize these programs and hope you can attend.

The first meeting of the planning committee for the observance of Urbandale's Centennial in 2017 was held in June at the City Hall. Historical Society members Wayne Robbins, Bob Simon, Norm Huitt, Bill Lawson and Virginia Gee were among those representing various groups in the city. Anyone who is interested is encouraged to participate. The next meeting is September 17th at 5:00 p.m.

John Konier, of the city staff, was organizing some materials related to early actions of city government. Virginia Gee went through our reference materials to help document how city logos have changed through the years from the big royal blue "U" which appeared on stationery, signs and vehicles to the more modern stylized "U" in a slanted block we see used today.

Don Brush, former councilman and mayor and longtime historical society member, came to look through some of our old clippings and photos to supplement his personal items acquired in his years of city government. He had a part in the dedication of the E. J. Giovannetti Community Shelter at Walker Johnston Park on August 22nd.

DUNA again set up their popcorn popper on the lawn of the Olmsted-Urban House during the July 4th parade to provide a treat to people in the area. Thanks to Janice Winey and Bob Simon, contacts are made so information about our Historical Society events is included in the newsletter sent out to DUNA members.

Take a Tour of Urbandale

Do you want to learn more about your community? Do you have family members who have been away for a few years or out-of-town visitors who have never been here? Now is a good time to take a real or virtual driving tour of some of the historical and cultural sites that are important to our ever changing community.

Logically, to learn about history, start at the Olmsted Urban House, 4010 70th Street, headquarters of the Urbandale Historical Society. Built in 1904, the house is furnished in the period of the 1920's and 1930's, and contains a wide collection of printed materials and objects related to Urbandale history. The barn includes farm related memorabilia.

To view the collection, come to a scheduled Open House or call 270-2917 in advance to arrange for a family or group tour. Also take time to look at the names on the memorial bricks in the Walk of History that leads from the house to the street.

Next go south to 70th and Douglas to what is now the Walgreens parking lot. This was the site of the first Urbandale two-room school built in 1913. A two-story brick building to serve all grades was constructed in 1926. Plaques on a memorial wall list the names of nearly 800 graduates starting with the Class of 1937. Through the years, the building was used by various grade levels until it was torn down in 1975. A sculpture also includes symbols of Urbandale High School activities.

More history is documented at 70th and Roseland at Trolley Park. This is the site of the turn-around for the trolley system starting in 1904. In later years, as many

as 100 round trips were made daily from downtown Des Moines. Service ended in 1951. The sculptures of a trolley and riders also includes informative metal plaques giving facts about Urbandale's early days and the trolleys.

Next, go back north on 70th Street to Meredith Drive and one of our oldest historical sites - McDivitt Grove Cemetery. When the son of William McDivitt, one of the earliest settlers died, the father set aside some of his farmland for a cemetery. Now grave markers give the names of many families important to the area's development. Most of the lots have been purchased, but there are two columbariums that have been erected with compartments to hold cremated remains. Contact Urbandale Parks and Recreation for more information about the cemetery.

Come back south on 70th Street to Aurora. Here you see Frerichs Field, named for long-time coach, Denny Frerichs. A variety of football, soccer, and track events are held here. This block is also the location of the new Urbandale High School. An earlier high school was built in 1959. Several additions, a gym and auditorium were constructed through the years. Except for the gym, now all these original buildings have been replaced by a greatly expanded structure. Open House for the new building was held in November 2009. Potential capacity is 1,800 students.

Just west on Aurora, past the Swimming Pool, is the Urbandale Senior Center. Originally built as the Urbandale Public Library, it became the Senior Center in 1988. A full schedule of social, recreational and education programs are offered throughout the week. A new Memory Garden includes plantings,

benches and engraved commemorative bricks.

Back on 72nd Street you will go past Lions Park. This was Urbandale's first park. The Gazebo was built in 1990 as part of an Eagle Scout project with funds from the city and community groups. A number of musical events are held here and the gazebo can even be rented for special events. It appears as a symbol in Urbandale's flag. The park is also the site of the Ralph Whitten Shelter House used by many community organizations and family groups. The office of UCAN and Caring Corp is located here.

Take Douglas west to 86th Street. This is the center of much of the community's activity. Here you will find the Water Department, Police Department, Parks and Recreation, and City Government. The new sculptures planned by the Fine Arts Committee have been positioned at the east side of the parking lot. For more art appreciation take time to come into the Urbandale Public Library and view the gallery displayed in the hallway to the meeting rooms. In the Youth and Children's section you will see many examples of the creative work of the artists from Sticks. Outside on the south side of the Library a butterfly garden has been planted.

Much community effort has gone into the development of the Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park featuring special sculptures, plantings, benches, and a fountain. A feature added in 2011 is the Memorial to Veterans with flags, stone markers, and donated bricks engraved with name, branch of service and military conflicts, that veterans have served. This is also a good place to access the popular walking trails.

Go south to Hickman and west to Living History Farms. Martin Flynn's Walnut Hill Farm at one time involved 1,700 acres. In 1870 the family built a substantial brick home which is known as the Flynn Mansion and has recently been restored. Though this was long before Urbandale became an incorporated community, the city boundaries have changed, and this nationally known tourist destination now officially has an Urbandale address.

Urbandale's development now goes many miles west of Interstate 35/80. If you go back up to Douglas and west to 128th Street and then north you will be at Webster School. This is the newest of Urbandale's elementary schools and is located at what was the site of an early one-room country school in Webster Township. Statistically, this is now nearly in the center of Urbandale, as boundaries stretch from Merle Hay road on the east to 154th Street in Dallas county on the west - an area of over 22 square miles. Urbandale's population is now over 40,000.

Conclude your trip by going north to Meredith Drive and back to 123rd Street to see some of the newest development. Here at Paragon Office park you can look at the beautiful Paragon Prairie Tower. Nearly 1.8 million pieces of glass tile were applied to create a prairie scene of grasses, corn, and wheat appearing beneath a blue sky. The tower, which can also be seen at night is now a cultural landmark believed to be the largest mosaic glass tile mural in the United States. At this location in the business park, the tower represents the old and new that is Urbandale, and provides a fitting ending to our symbolic trip around our growing community.

Clip and Save
Important Dates

September 9	Potluck and Meeting
October 6	Fall Open House
October 7	Meeting
October 8	Fall Bus Trip
October 14	Board Meeting
October 30	Punch on the Porch
November 3	Informal Open House
November 4	Meeting
November 18	Board meeting
December 8	Holiday Open House

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For more information about the Urbandale Historical Society, please contact us or look through our website.

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