



JOHNSTON Historical SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

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TIME & 4:00 P.M. April 26, 1995
PLACE Olmstead-Urban House 4010 70th
Urbandale, IA
PROGRAM Mary Jane Paez has arranged for
us to see the Omstead-Urban House
home of Urbandale Historical Soc.

OUR VISIT TO THE GOLD STAR MUSEUM

Dan Foxen, Museum Technician since March of 1994, talked to us about the relocation of the museum from the ground floor of the chapel (Memorial) building to Old Headquarters Building on Des Moines Street in Camp Dodge.

The museum is trying to display a chronological history of Iowa's Military experiences and encounters.

Foxen talked about collections at the Gold Star Museum, other resources, and how they might be useful to our members, committees and organization.

The museum has an archival collection of the civil war militia records for the State of Iowa, a county by county collection of those muster rolls. They have similar type muster rolls from the 1880's for the Iowa National Guard. They have a collection of subject files, which is a non-organic collection (i.e. it has been assembled from several sources), of WWI, WWII, and different activities, units and individuals who have an Iowa connection. Their theme is "Iowans serving the State and Nation". In their 4000 volume library is a collection of mainly history reference materials that could be of use to historical societies.

The museum has photos, some historical structure and site index photo compilations. The photo books document different building structures that are or were on the Camp Dodge post. One was done in the 1940's the other in 1988 or '89. They have other photographs, most of them not related to Camp Dodge; they come from individuals and pertain to their military service. Some photos that pertain are panoramics of Camp Dodge from about 1917 to 1919, also a number from the '20's and '30's. In 1922 all the wooden barracks were still standing. A year later photos show those barracks gone and tents in their place. That material is available on a limited basis. A lot of photos are in fair condition. some rolled up and are not matted or framed.

Their historical artifacts consist of uniforms, awards, insignias and decorations running from the Civil War right up to Desert Storm. The museum is starting to work on a historic walking tour. If anyone has pieces of information about Camp Dodge, they would be glad to learn about this, so it could be incorporated in their walking tour or otherwise.

The museum solicits info from the community and veterans. Don's telephone at Camp Dodge is 252-4531 or 252-4724. Mr. Foxen is anxious to work with the local historical societies and their members on any information which can further the purposes of either as it relates to the Iowa military service of people.

The walking tour is in its planning stages, could be an eagle scout project in Johnston. They would help in doing documentation of structures, their history and use throughout Camp Dodge in the periods of WWI, WWII and up to the present. In the meantime they would like to install some macro artifacts. Macro artifacts are large static outdoor displays, such as the tanks, howitzers, and aircraft(A-7) now on display.

Mr. Foxen is engaged in accession of artifacts, cataloging and recording for the Museum. The information as to their artifacts will eventually be contained in an automated database. They expect and aim that the efforts will be preserved for a couple of centuries.

The brick buildings were designed as mess halls the front part(kitchen), which contained ice boxes and coal-fired stoves, was a little wider than the rest of the building. Each company had its own mess hall, used in the summer to feed and in the winter to store the companies tents and tent floors(A wooden platform in 2 parts, the size of a tent) Concrete pads were later installed for tent floors and did not require storage. Later, when the State controlled the post, the mess halls were used as school rooms for the Johnston Schools. They have now been made into barracks. In the last few years, a few at a time were converted. All of them are now barracks.

Ret'd Col. Tom Bolton, who is in charge of the whole museum, was introduced by Bob Thomas. He thanked us for coming to the Gold Star Museum and invited us and all others to come back again. Stating that Iowa does not have many big military bases,battlefields,aircraft carriers or battleships, therefore they are focusing on people.

Col. Bolton, of Council Bluffs, asked us to tell others about the museum. He felt all people interested in history could benefit from each other in exchanging their learning experiences and information.

A volunteer is contemplating building a model of Camp Dodge. The camp once extended north of the Herrold road. The museum has some copies of deeds of acquisition. The camp was named after General Grenville Dodge of Council Bluffs, IA. First use as "Camp Dodge" that has been found was in 1911 for the rifle range. The site was used for summer maneuvers as early as 1907. Bob Thomas stated that plans for the museum have provided for a place to sell items of interest to patrons. He urged us to provide items, to raise money for our own organization.

There were up to 50,000 people in Camp Dodge during WWI. As many as 700 died of influenza. As many as 125,00 may have passed through.

A Veterans Affairs Office is on the post and they have military records of people of Iowa in military service.

DUES`

Dues for 1995-6 may be sent to the Treasurer at the address that appears in the banner of this newsletter. **YOU ARE REMINDED** that the deadline for Charter Members is May31, 1995 and dues to be a charter member must be paid for 1994-5 to the Treasurer.

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