



Winter 2010 Newsletter

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What A Year . . . What A Past What A Future In Ankeny!

WHERE WE HAVE BEEN --THE HISTORY OF 2010

2010 may not go down in very many books as remarkable. And when your history of records goes back 135 years, the chances of noteworthy news and events get very competitive.

But for the Ankeny Historical Society, this has been a red-letter year. In fact, putting it more bluntly it was a "get out of the red" year. For it was this year that we accomplished many things and among them was the retirement of the mortgage undertaken when the \$685,000 barn addition was built. The need for such a structure was dictated by the mind-boggling success of the Society in gathering treasures, antiques and momentos that tell the story of Ankeny's founding and history. Donations of furniture, photographs, clothing, tools, housewares, documents and other artifacts came in so steadily since the century-old house was moved to the present location in 1995, that it was bursting at the seams and storage was used in various Ankeny locations.

Talk began in 2002 of refurbishing the old bus barns once the school was finished with them. Other neighboring properties were also considered. But the practicality and affordability of those alternatives led to consideration of building the barn structure with the type of accessibility and ventilation needed by a museum housing such sensitive articles.

Ten years after the house had been moved and converted, the Society was raising funds and beginning the construction of the barn. A year later, the barn was done, moved into and was a new jewel for historic uptown Ankeny. But that jewel came with a price. The first \$630,000 was raised with much diligence, creativity, hard work and generosity. The last \$55,000 became a slight to severe headache...with interest payments haunting the group. Several avenues were explored before one led the way to success. It was then that Don and Charlene Lamberti stepped forward and put a challenge to the group that they would match donations up to half if that could be done in a year. Two months later, members, donors, businesses, friends and relatives had exceeded the challenge amount and in August the mortgage was burned.

So that was the centerpiece of a year that also saw great strides taken in the effort to better display and tell the story of Ankeny's role in the World War II effort with the Ordnance Ammunition Plant and its later conversion to the John Deere Manufacturing plant. Those two chapters took Ankeny from a sleepy town of 900 folks to a site that had 19,000 people working 24 hours shifts for three years for the war cause...and then a home to John Deere workers that became the backbone of Ankeny's growth for decades to come.

Now, that story and the displays have received a grant from John Deere to better tell and show those fantastic memoirs.

So couple those two accomplishments along with a Sunday Des Moines Register account of the Ordnance Plant workers, the video productions of those stories, the high school students conducting those interviews, 600 seventh graders touring the museums, dozens of other groups and individuals coming in for a look-see, an overwhelming week-end during the SummerFest Alumni gathering....plus selling some 600 sandwiches at the luncheon, and raising other funds from a cookie bazaar, a high tea, refreshments at Santa's North Pole Village and an ice cream social...and yeah, you could say we have had an eventful year. (continued on page 3)

JUST SOME OF THE THINGS THAT HAPPENED IN 2010



Christmas Comes All Year Long!

It felt like Christmas all year long from all the generous donations made to pay off the barn mortgage to receiving a check from John Deere Des Moines Works. The money from John Deere will go towards our permanent display for the Ordnance Plant.



Annual Cookie Sale

The annual Cookie Sale was a great success again this year. We sold 78 tickets for 156 dozen cookies. People had so many cookies to choose from it was hard to make a choice. Thank you to all who baked cookies for the sale and to all of you who bought 1,872 cookies. Be sure and save one or two of those cookies for Santa!



WHERE WE ARE GOING?--THE FUTURE OF OUR HISTORY

So what kind of an organization after accomplishing all of that in the past year, is looking for more? Well, I can confidently tell you: this one is. The January, 2011 meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month will be my 100th as president of the Ankeny Historical Society (kind of shows that nobody wanted the job while we had that mortgage I was telling you about). And although our membership tends to be more like 20-30 years older than me-- with a few exceptions that are five or six years older--I am always ready to suggest a "gee, are you sure we want to undertake all of that ..??" But before I can get that out of my mouth and into the written records, there is somebody seconding the original idea and a unanimous vote to proceed with the next activity. A lesser man would be worn-out. But I am grateful and inspired by their devotion and energy. They love Ankeny for what it was yesterday and what it is today. And being around them, even though I have lived in Ankeny for 55 years (yes, I was three when we migrated from Roland) I still feel like a newcomer...even though I remember the first stoplight in Ankeny (Third and Ankeny Boulevard). And what we all want as a Historical Society is to share that passion and appreciation of Ankeny with even more folks. So, don't be surprised if someone approaches you soon to see if you would like to join our organization. You can be as active or inactive as you'd like. You can help sling slaw at the annual BBQ lunch, bake a pie for the ice cream social, come up and work on the grounds, dust inside of the museum or help guide tours....or not.

And if you are already a member and you have bought friends and family members enough ties, sweaters or fruitcakes as holiday gifts over the years consider giving them the gift that keeps on giving: a membership to the Ankeny Historical Society.

Questions? Comments? Need membership information? Call our office at 965-5795.

And thank you for being part of Ankeny's history...member or not.

Ron Sampson



2011 NEW MEMBERSHIP DUES FORM

Check Category: Annual Dues

- \$15.00 Individual Membership**
- \$30.00 Family Membership**
- \$40.00 Business, Institution or Professional Membership**
- \$50.00 Extraordinary Support Membership**
- Other**

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address: _____

DATES TO REMEMBER

January 25— Board & Monthly Meeting—2 p.m.

February 22—Monthly Meeting—2 p.m.

March 22—Monthly Meeting—2 p.m.

April 3—Open House 2—4 p.m.

April 26—Monthly Meeting—7 p.m.

May 1—Open House 2—4 p.m.

May 24—Monthly Meeting—7p.m.

June 5—Open House 2—4 p.m.

Historical Society meetings are held in the lower level of our house museum located at 301 SW Third Street.

*Note change in meeting times
November through March.*

The Ankeny Area Historical Society is established to collect and secure artifacts and historical records representing Alleman, Ankeny, Bondurant, Carney, Elkhart, Enterprise, Polk City, and Sheldahl for the purpose of preserving American Heritage

2011 Officers

Ron Sampson - President

Rachel Jones - Vice President

Norma Righi - Secretary

Joyce Lundstrom - Treasurer

Board of Directors

Barbara Agan, Terry Adamson,
Roger Spahr

Ober Anderson, Margie Law

Katie Kendall

Don Penquite, Dennis Adamson,
Bryan Lundstrom

Ex-Officio

Dr. Matthew Wendt - Superintendent of Schools

JoAnn Adamson - Past President

Bonnie S. Ballard - Past President

Joe Morr - Past President

Myrtle L. Sexauer - Past President

Barbara J. White - Past President

Past Presidents

*Wayne A. Begg

James W. Anderlik

*Richard D. Hermann

*Willard L. Nagle

*Deceased



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