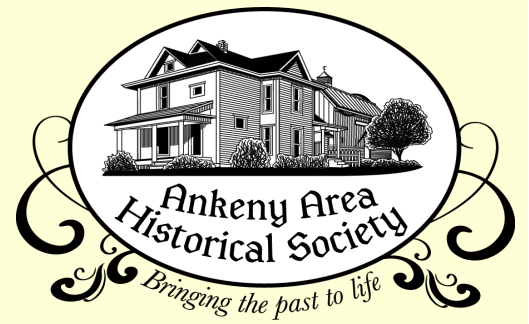


NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2026



ANKENY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY *Volume 33 Number 2*

2026 Officers

Carmine Boal, Co-President

Rose Hutton Taylor, Co-President

Rob Logan, Vice-President

Madison Zirretta, Secretary

John Wolff, Treasurer

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Ankeny, IA 50021

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Message from the President

When John Fletcher Ankeny recorded the plat for the city of Ankeny in 1875, it is impossible for us to know his vision for the fledgling city. We do know he was motivated to establish the city named after him because of his financial interest in a narrow-gauge railroad scheduled to be laid directly through Ankeny from Des Moines to Ames, but he could not possibly know that Ankeny would someday fortuitously be located very near where two interstate highways would intersect. He also could not have known that in 1941 the federal government would select the city of Ankeny to build an Ordnance Plant to manufacture ammunition and a hospital to help in the war effort during WWII, creating a workforce of 19,000, rapidly increasing Ankeny's population, even after the Ordnance Plant was purchased by John Deere—another bonus for the city. John Fletcher Ankeny did not also likely know that three productive coal mines in nearby towns of Carney, Oralabor, and Enterprise in the early 1900s would bring many immigrants to the area, providing rich diversity and growth to Ankeny.

While these geopolitical booms and events certainly have helped Ankeny grow to a city of nearly 80,000, it is important to note that the thousands of people who have called Ankeny their home in the last 150 years are also responsible for growing this city. These ordinary citizens worked, paid their taxes, raised their families, and lived their lives in such a way to create a culture that made Ankeny the kind of community where crime is low and citizen involvement in civic organizations, schools, and churches are commonplace.

(Continued)

Message From the President — *continued*

These everyday ‘heroes’ caused Ankeny to be and continue to be a place that people desire to call ‘home’.

At the Ankeny Area Historical Society, our mission is **to inspire in our community a sense of meaning and belonging by sharing the history and culture of the Ankeny area.** While it is important to acknowledge the efforts of our founder, John Fletcher Ankeny, it is also true that each resident of Ankeny—past and present—have also helped to write our city’s history for future generations. You are now part of that history-writing group. Please help us record your history by going to our website at www.ankenyhistorical.org to purchase a membership or a commemorative brick.

Sincerely,
Carmine Boal
Co-President

Thank you for the Des Moines Ordnance Plant Photos

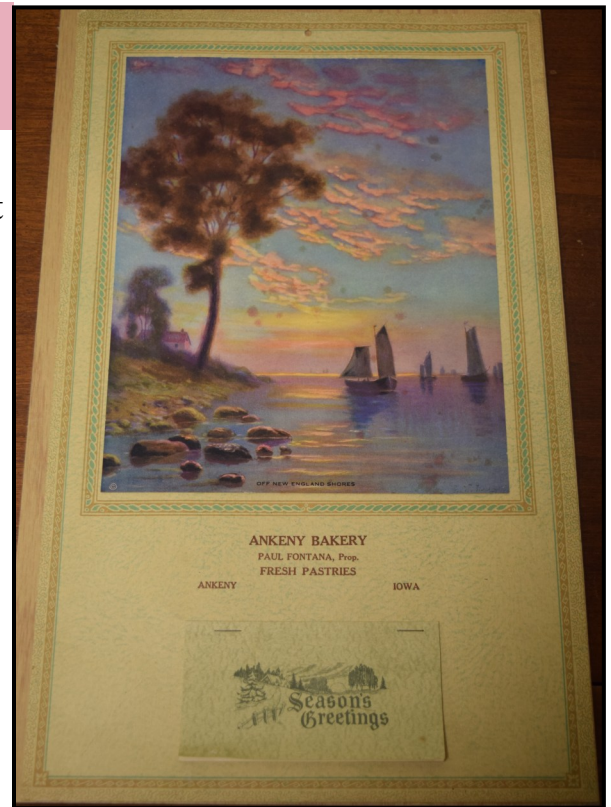
The Ankeny Area Historical Society would like to thank Dave and Chris Miller for their generous donation of two prints and negatives of Des Moines Ordnance Plant workers from WWII. They found the negatives at an auction and had them printed for us. We also would like to thank Lois and Tom O’Donnell for having them framed for us. The photos and framing are very generous gifts, and we cannot thank you enough for your thoughtfulness. You can see the prints at the museum in our Ordnance Plant Display.



1927 Fontana Bakery Calendar Returns to Ankeny

Bob Wise of Florida found a 1927 Fontana Bakery calendar that his father had. Bob and his father had not lived in Ankeny, but his father's sister and brother-in-law, Jodi and Ed Strong, had lived in Ankeny. Bob donated the calendar to the society.

Paul Fontana purchased the bakery in 1921, the same year he married his wife Isola Carzoli. He then moved the business from Carney to uptown Ankeny, where the American Legion Hall is now. The bakery was later moved across the street. His brother-in-law Leno Carzoli worked in the bakery with him. Leno later owned the bakery. Many remember the bakery as By-Lo. They were famous for the Italian bread, cinnamon rolls, and cookies, just to name a few of the items they sold.



Thank You Centennial Seniors!

As the saying goes, “Many hands make light work.” Thanks to Centennial seniors who helped us on April 27, we were able to get yard work and cleaning done at the museums. The seniors helped with weeding, mulching, dusting, sweeping and cleaning windows. Also, a thank you to Mr. Tom Ferguson who accompanied the students.

We would also like to thank the City of Ankeny for the mulch and for delivering it to us.



Dedication of Plaque to Lamberti Family

On May 3, AAHS presented to the Lamberti family a plaque for their on-going generous support they have shown the society through the years. The plaque has been placed on the outside of the barn museum. After the presentation, Jeff Lamberti gave a program about getting the USS Iowa museum ready.



In Memory of Gene Samuelson

A great supporter of our society, Gene Samuelson, passed away on November 2, 2025 at the age of 95. We will miss him. Gene was a very generous man to the society throughout the years. Upon his death, Gene donated \$50,000 to the society. We are very, very grateful and appreciative of this donation.

We would like to express our deepest sympathies to his family. We will miss him.



Summer Open Houses

June:

- 6 – Open House (10am – noon)
- 11 – Iowa Museum Week - Program/Video the Making of Saylorville Lake (6pm) & Night at the Museum (7 – 8:30pm)
- 13 - Open House (10am – noon)
- 20 – Juneteenth Open House (10am - noon)
- 27 - Open House (10am – noon)

July:

- 11 - Open House (10am – noon)
- 12 - Program/Special Event – Spirits of '76 (1pm)
- 18 - Open House (10am – noon)
- 25 - Open House (10am – noon)

August:

- 1 - Open House (10am – noon)
- 8 - Open House (10am – noon)
- 15 - Open House (10am – noon)
- 22 - Open House (10am – noon)
- 23 – Ice Cream Social (2 – 4pm)
- 29 - Open House (10am – noon)

Museum Special Events

Ankeny Area Historical Society
Presents



A NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

THURSDAY, JUNE 11

The showing of the video
"Making of Saylorville Lake"
will begin at 6pm.

Rangers from the Corp of Engineers will also be on
hand to answer questions about the lake.

Tour our museum where local characters from
the past come to life and tell us about Ankeny's
history from 7 - 8:30pm.

Wise Guy Pizza will also be on
hand with their delicious
wood burning oven pizzas!

FREE ADMISSION,
BUT DONATIONS
ARE ALWAYS
APPRECIATED!

301 SW THIRD ST
ANKENY, IA



ORALABOR: TO WORK, TO PRAY, TO BE OF SERVICE



JUNETEENTH

HISTORY OF BLACK COAL MINERS IN ANKENY AND THE STATE OF IOWA

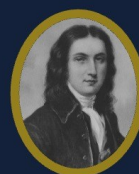
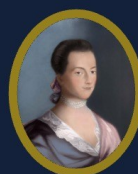
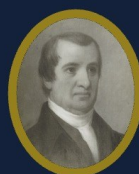
SATURDAY, JUNE 20
10AM - 12PM

COME CELEBRATE THE RICH HISTORY OF THE
ORALABOR COAL MINING NEIGHBORHOOD WITH
A SCAVENGER HUNT, PRIZES, AND A TAKEAWAY
TO REMEMBER THE EXPERIENCE.

ANKENY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
301 SW THIRD ST

"Spirits of '76" Five Voices of the Revolution

Step into the Revolution through five unforgettable voices in *Spirits of '76 - Five Voices of the Revolution*. From the halls of independence to the front lines of everyday life, this program brings the era to life through the words and experiences of Abraham Clark, John Hart, Abigail Adams, Thomas Paine, and Jeffrey Brace. Portrayed in part through a first-person performance by Dave Baker, Iowa writer and blogger of "The 29th State," this one-hour program explores how the Revolution began, why independence was declared, and what it meant to those who lived it—from a signer and a statesman to a writer, a woman, and a man who fought for freedom while still enslaved.



Sunday July 12, 2026 at 1:00 pm at the Ankeny Area Historical Society
301 SW 3rd St, Ankeny, IA 50023

Sponsored by the Ankeny Area Historical Society and The 29th State. An America 250 Event.



Annual Ice Cream Social

What's better on an August Sunday afternoon than pie, cake and ice cream?
Our annual Ice Cream Social will be held on Sunday, August 23 from 2 pm to 4 pm.

Long-time Ankeny teachers and coaches Jerry Pezzetti, Fred Smith, and Bob Sharp will be recognized and honored. All three men were very influential in the Ankeny school system for years as they impacted thousands of students.

ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Sunday, August 23
2:00pm - 4:00pm



Homemade
pies,
cookies, and
bars!

We will be recognizing
long-time Ankeny teachers
and coaches
Jerry Pezzetti,
Fred Smith, and
Bob Sharp

Live music
and
games!

Ankeny Area Historical Society
301 SW Third Street

Free will donation. All are welcome!

Pezzetti came to Ankeny in 1969 as the head varsity football coach and physical education teacher. He also coached freshman boys track. Smith came to Ankeny in 1971 as a varsity assistant football coach, head varsity track coach, and a junior high social studies teacher. Smith later became the athletic director at Ankeny High School. Sharp was the Ankeny High School industrial arts teacher and coached the wrestling team to the state championship in 1971.

These men have had a great impact on our community and school system over the years. Their contributions to the education and athletic programs at Ankeny over the years are priceless. Please join us to recognize these Ankeny legends.

Museum Snapshots



(Left) Co-Presidents Rosemary Hutton Taylor and Carmine Boal helped celebrate the 85th year of the Ankeny Lions Club.

(Below) In April, the Boy Scouts had a fun time touring our museum and learning all about Ankeny history!



Come Visit Us Soon!

Monday - Thursday
8:30am - 12:00pm

Tours are by appointment only
and can be scheduled at:

515-965-5795 or
history@ankenyhistorical.org

