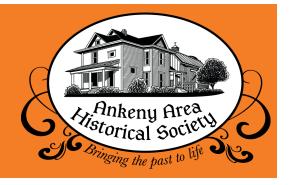
NEWSLETTER

Fall 2025/Winter 2026



ANKENY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 32 Number 2

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Message from the Presidents

What a year we've had in Ankeny! The Historical Society wanted to celebrate our great city's 150th anniversary (the sesquicentennial), focusing on the history and progress of the town. Each month, we

held an event where residents could join in. Many of our members attended several of these events, and we thank all of you for your continued support!

In January, we invited past board members and members to view the new professionally produced video about Ankeny's history. This video is the "short and sweet" version that everyone will enjoy. View it on our website - www.ankenyhistorical.org. Then, in February, we held a "Vintage



Valentine" party, where folks made homemade valentines, decorated cookies, or painted decorative rocks. The March event was to honor our city's fine police department, and a large audience met 5 of our finest (including Chief Potts) and learned so much. In April, our first female mayor, Bobbi Bentz, came to meet her constituents.

The May event was a "birthday party" to celebrate the 201st birth anniversary of our founder John Fletcher Ankeny, and five members of his family attended. June was when we held our annual "Night at the Museum," (in timely costume), and focused on the coal mining industry near Ankeny around the early 1900s. Evan Albaugh spoke about the Enterprise mines, and the audience really enjoyed learning about it.

The July event was the big "hoorah" with a float in the Summerfest parade, followed by a chicken dinner at the Ankeny Market Pavilion.

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(message from president continued)

John and Joan Jensen provided the float, while the museum provided the antique school desks, banners, and "actors" on the float, which was followed by a 1946 Army Jeep, representing our role in WWII and the ordnance plant. We actually won a trophy for our work! The chicken dinner was a reflection on all the chicken cook-outs held in the city park by the Lions Club for generations. With live music, clown with balloons, Uptown's kiddie train, yard games, and delicious chicken dinner, the day was a real success.

In August, we celebrated with our 20th annual ice cream social with around 300 people enjoying the live music, kids' games, the desserts, and ice cream ... and we presented the police department with a "Certificate of Appreciation." The crowd really enjoyed seeing the old 1964 Chevy "cop car" and loved petting the K-9 dogs that play a very important role in their efforts.

September was our "Back to School" open house with a great scavenger hunt for kids and adults. Several Uptown businesses donated nice gift certificates to the winners of that hunt. Our event in October was the "Chili Cookoff & Apple Pie Contest." Thanks to Steve Van Oort for judging the pies for us!

November is Veterans' Month, so it is only right to "Salute our Veterans!" with information and speakers for all vets and members. And, December will be Santa's Holiday Bake Shop with a bake sale of cookies, bars, candies ... and Santa! We hope you can come, shop, and take pictures for the holiday.

We think the museum and its board of directors has given the city a gift of history during 2025. And, we want to thank everyone who was involved in any and all of the events. Our hope is to spread the history to the community ... and remind folks we ALL have our history here. The older have their history, and the younger are making theirs. Let's continue to share the stories! Follow the Ankeny Area Historical Society on Facebook or www.ankenyhistorical.org. 2026 will bring even more history!

Yours in history, JoAnn Adamson & Lois O'Donnell

Days of Yesteryears to the Present... "Growing Up Ankeny"

As part of Ankeny's Sesquicentennial, we interviewed 17 people as part of a project called "Growing Up Ankeny." Bob Fontana coordinated and narrated the interviews, and Rose and Rich Taylor were the videographers. The 17 people all graduated from Ankeny High School and have lived in Ankeny ever since. These 17 all served Ankeny in different occupations over the years. They all shared great memories about the questions they were asked. Their interviews are on the Ankeny Area Historical Society website and are on the monitors in our museum barn.

Enjoy these interviews as you listen to these Ankeny natives. Their names are listed in the order they were interviewed and the year they graduated from Ankeny High School.

Dennis Albaugh -1968

Sid Conkel -1964

Karen Marvin-Anderson -1966

Paula Marvin-Leverenz -1970

Kristin Barber - 2001

Jim & Judy Logan -1964

Dave Hoover -1968

Jack Zimmer -1958

Joe Bianchi -1958

Joann Adamson -1965

Dale Hanke -1965

Ron Sampson -1971

Rosemary Hutton-Taylor -1972

Mike Fontana -1987

Don Madole - 1963

Joe Ferin - 1998





(Above) John F. Ankeny's Great Grandchildren are Parade Marshals in Summerfest Parade

As we celebrate Ankeny's sesquicentennial and the founder of Ankeny, we were fortunate to have Peter Ankeny Brown and Hillary Ankeny Brown be the honorary parade marshals for the Summerfest parade. Peter and Hillary are John Ankeny's great grandchildren. Their grandmother, Susan Ankeny Brown, was one of John Ankeny's daughters and she married Ernest Brown. The convertible they rode in was donated by Karl Chevrolet and Danielle Sullivan. A big thank you to Danielle for driving the Ankeny-Brown family in the parade.

(Below) Neveln's Granddaughters Visit to the Museum

During Summerfest, Ed and Bertha Neveln's granddaughters visited the museum and the house their grandparents lived in from 1921-1946. The Marts house was given to the Neveln's as a wedding gift from Bertha's family. This house was the foundation of the Ankeny Area Historical Society.

Melinda, Kathy and Michelle Burns made their first visit to the museum along with great - granddaughter Caia. Their mom was Charlene Neveln Burns, a long-time Ankeny resident who graduated from Ankeny High School in 1951.





Farmland to Frontline...The Story of Ankeny's Ordnance Plant and Prairie Trail District

The year was 1941...World War 2 had been going on for two years and the United States was on the brink of getting involved. And the US government and War Department were preparing for the inevitable. They chose Ankeny, Iowa as one of the sites for an ammunition and ordnance plant. In doing so they chose 2445 acres of farm ground and notified 22 farmers and landowners that they had 30 days to get off their land so the Ordnance plant could be built. These farmers and landowners received very little compensation. These Ankeny residents had never been recognized for their sacrifices. Historical Society Board member Bob Fontana approached long-time Ankeny native Dennis Albaugh about recognizing these farmers who gave up their land for the betterment of our country. The original plat map was located where each farmer lived and a story was written about the history of the farmers, the Ordnance plant, the development of John Deere, The Iowa State Research farm, DMAAC and the development of the Prairie Trail District. Fontana and Steve Van Oort made presentations to the Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club and City Council. A brushed steel model was made of the plat map along with the farmers' names and the story. A steel plate with this same information will be made and installed in the Town Center area of the District later this fall. And the brushed steel model will be displayed in the Historical Society.

(Below) Former Classmates Take a Tour and See Floppy

There were many Ankeny graduates in town during Summerfest attending class reunions and visiting family and friends. Some of these Ankeny natives visited the museum and these six ladies saw Floppy being housed at the museum. They mentioned how they remember watching Floppy all the time as young girls and even seeing Floppy at school assemblies and the State Fair.

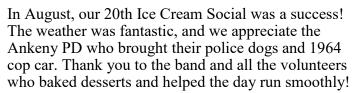


From 1980 and 1975 classes left to right are: Cathy Burns, Terri Anderson-Yarrow, Sonya Heinen, Christy Feltes-Krugler, Chris Gossen and Melinda Burns.

20th Annual Ice Cream Social!















(Continued)

Museum Event Highlights









(Top Left) In June, our Night at the Museum open house brought characters dressed in period costumes that represented Ankeny's history. Evan Albaugh spoke about the coal mines near Ankeny, and attendees enjoyed the Wise Guys pizza truck!





(Top Right) In November, we held a Salute Our Veterans open house. Thank you to Larry Wright and the Blue Star Mothers for speaking!

In July, we had such a great time at the Chicken Dinner at the AMP to celebrate Ankeny's 150th anniversary! A huge thank you to all who attended and volunteered!









Fall Fun





(Left) Our Co-Presidents Lois O'Donnell and JoAnn Adamson at Pumpkins and Pints in October!

(Right) Members of the AAHS Board decorated a trunk and handed out candy at the Uptown Trunk-Or-Treat in October!











(Left) In October, we had a fun chili cook-off and apple pie contest!
Congratulations to our 1st place chili winners - Bob Fontana and Rob Logan, 2nd place winners - Larry Grant and Jake Hinrickson, and our 3rd place winner - Lois O'Donnell.
Congratulations to Tierra Mayberry who won the apple pie contest!

(Below) In November, we held our Heritage Corner dedication. Families who attended shared stories and memories, then enjoyed some delicious refreshments together.







Thank You!

General Donations

Your donations are truly appreciated. Please accept our apology if your name was not included with this issue.

Linda Randolph Ober Anderson Karen Cross

Karla & Larry Wright S. Hilary Brown Peter Brown

Marcus Pitts Don and Carolyn Zuck Ivan & Patricia Parker

Connie Carney Tara Antle Christine Krugler

Don Fliger Bob & Kathy Pertzborn Gary & Jo Ellen Nervig

Janet Leonard Kathy Sells Gerald Dutcher

Janet Christians Annette Doman State Farm - Kenneth Nelson

Donna & Maurice Thompson Mary Jo Bennett Daria Bentley



A big thank you to

Jason Duke and John Deere crew
for the taking time to complete our annual
landscaping cleanup here at the museum.

We appreciate your hard work!



Come Visit Us Soon!

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

Tours are available by appointment only:

515-965-5795 or history@ankenyhistorical.org



