



Fall 2019 Newsletter

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Polk County Coal Mining

Following Article taken from AAHS Coal Mining Display

Enterprise, Carney and Oralabor are three coal-mining communities that were near Ankeny at the turn of the 1900's. Oralabor and parts of Carney are now part of Ankeny.

Enterprise is located 3 ½ miles east of Ankeny Boulevard on N.E. 94th Avenue on the former Coskery farm. Two coal mines were established in 1902 and at one time the population of Enterprise was 800. Population of Ankeny in 1910 was 445. Mine No. 1 was located one-half mile north of Enterprise.

The coal mine owned the Company Store which was a large building. Joe Sterling was the manager. The miners charged their groceries and supplies from one paycheck to the next, which would be deducted from their earnings. The miners were paid in gold.

Various accommodations were available in Enterprise: A Company Store where miners could purchase supplies, a hotel operated by a Mr. Johnson which had a capacity to house 25 people, a Baptist church, a post office, a movie house, a pool hall, a barber shop, Gar Long drug store, a livery barn operated by Ralph Brazelton (later sold to Lewis Fontana), a ice house (Alva Albaugh and sons went to Skunk River to cut ice and saw dust was used to keep ice frozen), and Dominic Giannasi's store. Ross Staley was depot agent and railroad section foremen were: John Scarcello and Sam Karras.

When the mines shut down many people moved away. Gradually houses were moved to Ankeny, Bondurant and Elkhart. There was also a mine (No.2) located one-half mile south of Enterprise on the Charles/Bud Cairns farm. Enterprise mine #1 was open in 1903 and mine #2 opened in 1907. Both mines were operational until 1917.

Crocker Township had two important mines, the Carney (Saylor Coal Company No. 2 shaft) and Oralabor (Saylor Coal and Mining Company). The Carney mine opened in 1906 and operated until 1928. This was a relatively deep mine some 350 feet and produced a clean high quality coal. At some places the vein was as much as five feet thick and it was a dry mine not bothered with water.

In the winter months more than three hundred miners were employed. In 1908, the Carney mine was the country's leading producer of coal. The Oralabor shaft was to the north and was an entirely different type mine. The coal was of poorer quality with a high sulfur content and had to be cleaned before marketing. Mining for the most part was north of the shaft. There was a continuous water problem and finally the mine had to be closed when heavy water broke through in 1946.

The superintendent of the mines was the Carney brothers. Miners liked the management and thought they were well treated and given opportunities for extra earnings that did not exist in many mines of that day.

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Enterprise, Iowa Coal Mining

Article taken from Wikipedia

With the history of a large vein of coal just a few miles East of Ankeny, The Des Moines Coal & Mining Company (later renamed to the Enterprise Coal Company) would open Enterprise Mine No. 1 in 1903. As more workers arrived, a town was quickly set up to accommodate the miners and their families. Drivers were paid \$1.75 per day, common laborers earned between \$1.50 and \$1.60 per day, and miners would earn \$1.25 per ton. The town would expand further with the opening of Mine No. 2 in 1907, about a half mile to the south of town. In 1914, the Enterprise Coal Company was ranked as one of the top 24 coal producers in the state. The vein would eventually run dry, and in 1919 Enterprise would be shut down as a coal mining town. Many of the workers moved to Ankeny, and began new lives farming the surrounding area or working for the numerous stores in the town's center.



AUCTION SALE OF TOWN LOTS.
On Wednesday, October 29th, at 2 p. m.

IN ENTERPRISE!

The new town on the Des Moines, Iowa Falls & Northern, located on the Crookery farm, in Douglass Township, Polk Co., Iowa. 15 miles north of Des Moines and about 15 miles south of Cambridge. This town is located in a good farming country and in the midst of great coal fields.

It will be a hummer when the coal mines are in operation.

NEXT WEDNESDAY

✕ ✕ The Opening Day ✕ ✕

You can secure lots for homes, business and investment very cheap.

TERMS: $\frac{1}{4}$ cash, $\frac{1}{4}$ in 6 months, balance in 12 months, 6 per cent in.

Enterprise Coal Mine #1



Enterprise Coal Mine #2

Coal Mining in Iowa 1870—1940

Article taken from iowahist.uni.edu

The earliest settlers mined coal among the hills of south central Iowa. They used coal to heat their homes and cook their food in areas where timber was not available.

Not until 1870 did the industry of coal mining begin to rapidly grow in Iowa. By that time the major Iowa railroads reached from the Mississippi River in the east to the Missouri River in the west. The railroads leased land in coal producing areas and operated mines which produced coal for the use of the railroads. These were the largest and most productive mines in the state.

Iowa coal mining grew rapidly from 1870—1920. The production of coal after 1920 declined for several reasons. The railroads began buying coal from other states such as Illinois and Kentucky. In addition, Iowans began looking to other energy sources for home use such as electricity, natural gas and oil.

What Was Life Like In A Coal Camp?

Usually a coal camp had several hundred small homes, a company store, a tavern or pool hall, and a school. Most coal companies required that miners shop only at the company store which sold everything from “cradles to coffins.” Most mining families didn’t like this restriction. Because the average coal mine lasted only ten years, little care was given to the appearance of these camps.

What Was It Like Inside A Coal Mine?

During the course of Iowa’s coal mining days, there were four main methods for reaching the coal deposits.

Where the coal deposit lay horizontal and was visible from a hillside, entry could be made directly into the coal deposit. This was called a drift mine.

Where the coal deposit lay not more than a hundred feet from the surface of the ground, a sloping tunnel could be cut to the coal. This was called a slope mine.

Where the coal deposit was close to the surface and the layers above could be easily removed, a strip mine was set up.

When the deposit was so deep that a slope would be difficult to construct, a vertical shaft was sunk down to the coal deposit. From there horizontal tunnels were cut into the deposit forming a room and pillar mine.



More Iowa Coal Mining charts, diagrams and pictures found at
https://iowahist.uni.edu/Social_Economic/CoalMining_inIowa/coal_mining_in_iowa.htm

Upcoming Newsletters and Programs

In the Winter and Spring Newsletters we will continue to explore Coal Mining around the Ankeny area with conversations from John Jensen who has discovered with the help of a metal detecting company quite a few interesting relics in his fields left over from the Enterprise coal mining days!

Also, an Ankeny High School student has been tracking old plat maps online and has collected various plat maps and locations of old houses in Enterprise when it was at its highest population back in the early 1900s. He will be giving a presentation of old Enterprise coming up in Spring 2020 here at our museum.

Memorials

Memorial monies were donated to Ankeny Area Historical Society in memory of the following individuals:

Russ Benjamin

Bev Bianchi

Ron Heston

Wilma Cornwell

Donations

Kari Bethel

Bobbi Bentz

Raise the Roof Donations

Don & Charlene Lamberti

Jill Price

Dan Quinlin

Karen Sell

Debra Steilen

Thank you so much for your memorials and donations!

New Members—Welcome!

Frederick Hall

Janelle Jacobsen

Wee's Tees

Carol Wenndt

Thank you so much for your yearly membership!

Without your yearly donation we wouldn't

Be able to keep our doors open

For future generations to enjoy and learn

About Ankeny's Amazing History!

We Are RAISING THE ROOF!

ANKENY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY - RAISING FUNDS FOR THE ROOF!

Yes, our House Museum is in need of a new roof! So, we are **"Raising Funds For The Roof!"** In an effort to pick a roofing material that will last a longer life than the typical asphalt shingles on the roof now, we have obtained several estimates for a metal roof to compliment our barn museum roof with a longer life span of 40 years. So, we are beginning a capital campaign to raise money for the roof and complete our project for future generations to enjoy.



Please consider donating to our worthy cause.

We accept all monetary donations and
you will be helping to maintain
Ankeny Historical Society House Museum
for future generations!

Thank you for supporting the Ankeny Area Historical Society.

We are a non-profit—501(c)(3) organization.

Ankeny Area
Historical Society

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Ankeny Historical and Ankeny Quilt Guild Host Quilting Over the Past 150 Years

On Sunday, September 1st, the Ankeny Historical and Ankeny Quilt Guild hosted a quilt show with over 40 beautiful quilts on display in the museum house and barn along with a short quilt story on each quilt. The owners of the quilts allowed us to keep the quilts on display through the month of September for other groups to view and enjoy the beautiful artwork through the past 150 years. Thank you to everyone that loaned their quilt for us to display! And thank you to Ankeny Quilt Guild for having quilt experts on hand for people to ask questions!

Here are a few of the quilts on display for you to enjoy!



Quilt from Red Level, AL



Quilt from 1860s



Quilt from 1890s



Quilt from early 1900s



Quilt from early 1920s



Quilt from 1929

Visiting Ankeny Family Members



Gerry & Melody Perrin
Detroit, MI



Gerry & Melody Perrin
Karla Wright, Johnston, IA

Each year AAHS meets descendants of the John Fletcher Ankeny Family that stop in to see our house and barn museum. This summer Melody and Gerry Perrin from the Detroit, Michigan area stopped in to see us and our museums. Karla Wright is from Johnston, IA and also an Ankeny Area Historical Museum member and she visits us and our events frequently during the year. We enjoy meeting all the Ankeny family members and hope they enjoy our museums!

Check out our website! And follow us on Facebook!

Check out our webpage at Ankenyhistorical.org You can now pay for your membership online if you wish. As a member, you can now view our newsletters, upcoming events, flyers and pictures of Ankeny through the years.

Our monthly "Ankeny Through the Decades" feature is now in its fourth year! Members of the society review articles from Ankeny's former newspapers: The Ankeny Times, Ankeny Today, and the Ankeny Press Citizen.

Dates for 2019

***Visit our Open Houses the
first Sunday of each month during the year
from 2:00pm—4:00pm!***

***October—Pumpkins...Pumpkins at the House for Sale!
October 10—5:00pm—7:00pm Eat Drink & Be Scary
Halloween and Chili Cookoff Event
November 3—2:00pm—4:00pm Open House
November —December 14—Another Vintage
Christmas—Twelve Days of Christmas—Open
Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays—9:00am-
3:00pm
December 7—Cookie Walk and Uptown Santa***

***Check out our website for upcoming
dates and programs!
ankenynhistorical.org and follow us
On Facebook!***

Mission:

***The Ankeny Area Historical Society's mission is to
inspire in our community a sense of meaning and
belonging by sharing the history and culture of the
Ankeny area.***



***Our House Museum is Open
Year Round on Tuesdays and Thursdays
9:00am-3:00pm!***

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