

Ankeny through the decades...

recalling Ankeny news from the 1940s, 1960s, 1980s*

September 2020

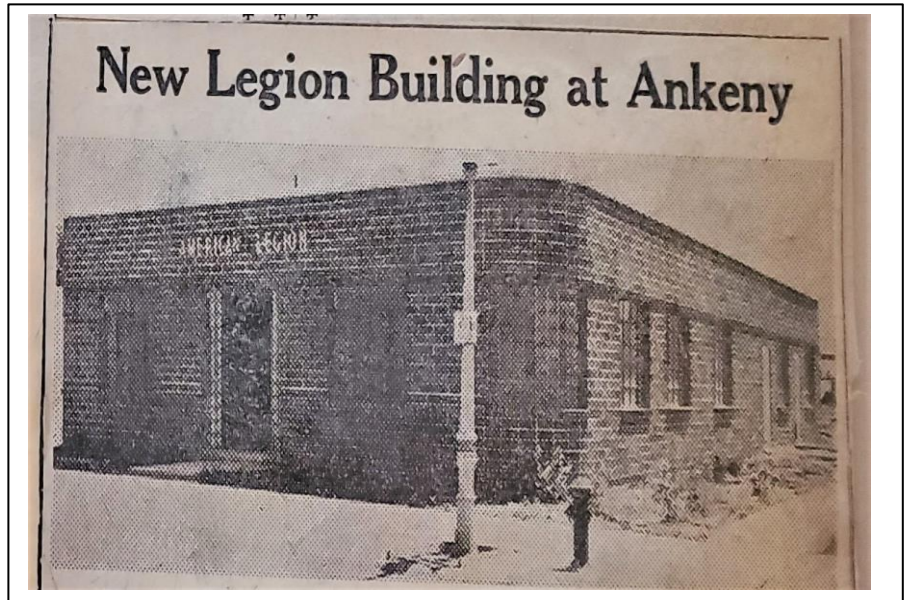


1939 & 40s

Egg-Laying Contest Will Begin Sept. 28

Much interest is being shown by local people in the Egg-Laying Contest that got underway Monday. The actual contest will begin the 28th of September. The hens are being fed a uniform feed at the present time in preliminary days before the actual 50 days contest begins. Sargent Milling Company is furnishing laying mash for the hens entered in the contest.

Entries for the event are: Charles Wheeler, Charles Petefish, John Petefish, Paul Swartzfager, Donald Smith, Robert Sandquist, James Blair, Arvid Quick, Cornelius Hutton, Edward Billings, Junior Geisler, Ed Wheeler. There are five pens of Leghorns, one pen of Plymouth Rocks, two pens of New Hampshire Reds, two pens of mixed breeds, two pens of Buff Orphingtons. Cornelius Hutton is chairman of this division and Donald Cornwell is his assistant. *Ankeny Times, September 22, 1939*



This new American Legion building, in the center of the Ankeny business district, will be dedicated at ceremonies there at 1:30 p.m. Monday. It was built at a cost of \$16,500 on a lot donated by the city. It is 40 by 78 feet, of glazed tile block. Neighboring Legion posts are to participate in the dedication. *Ankeny Times, September 6, 1946*

Rabbit Season Opens August 1

The open hunting season on protected game begins August 1 when cottontail and jack rabbit becomes legal sport throughout the entire state. The daily bag limit is 10. Rabbit populations in the state last season, although much better than the previous one, were spotty. During the past hunting season some 400,000 rabbits found their way into the hunters' game pockets. Conservation officers and interested sportsmen report a definite increase in the numbers in almost every sector of the state. *Ankeny Times, August 4, 1944*

**Wording has been reduced to fit the space in some cases. Additional decades will be covered in future issues. Please become a member of the AAHS or send comments via email at: history@ankenyhistorical.org.*



Ankeny Area Historical Society

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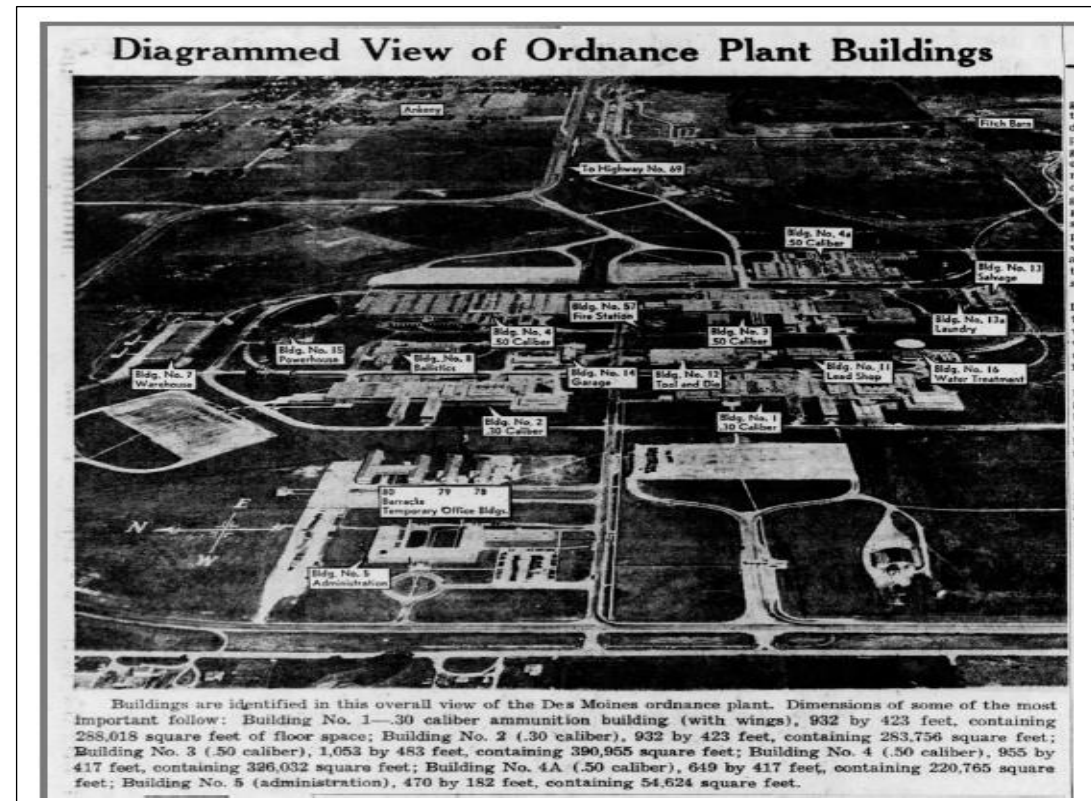
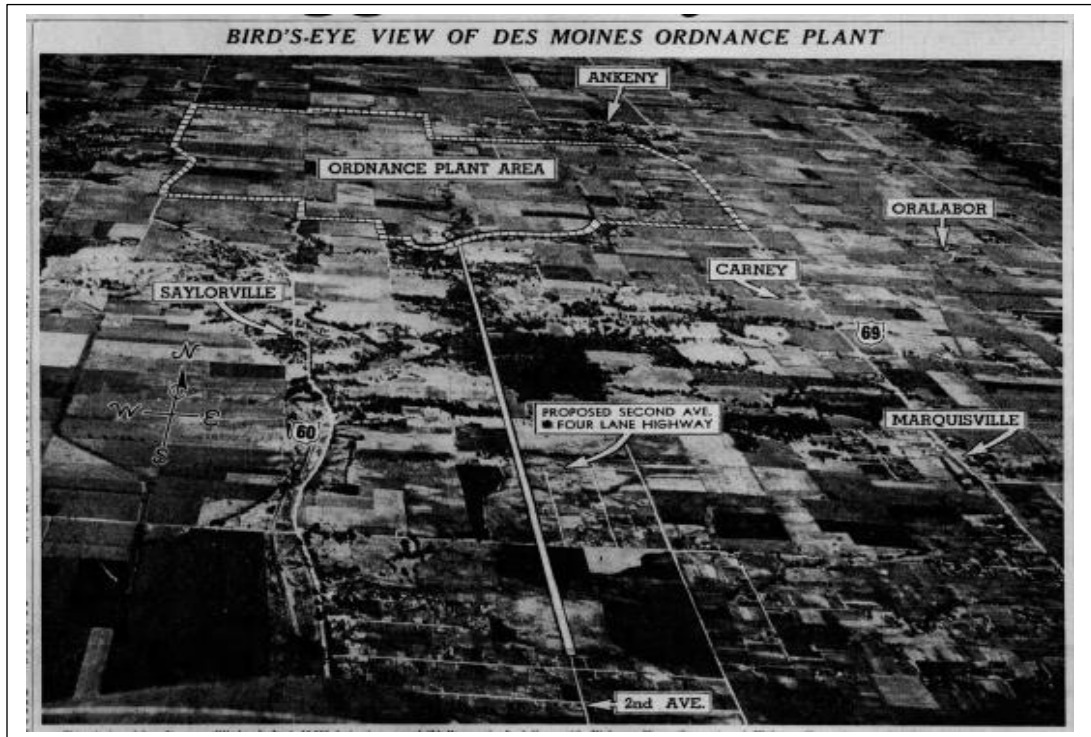
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1940s

This airview, taken from an altitude of 10,000 feet, gives a real “bird’s-eye view” of the Des Moines Ordnance Plant under construction north of the city. White line (center) shows route of proposed new four-lane highway to extend from Second Ave. in Des Moines directly north to the plant. At the northern end of the new concrete road, diagonal extensions will be built to connect with Highway 60 on the west and Highway 69 on the east. Details as to the location of these connecting roads have not yet been determined, state highway commission officials said. Tribune photo by George Yates from Register and Tribune plane, Good News VII. *Des Moines Tribune*, September 2, 1941



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1939

Cheering Football Crowds: Great Crowds in the football stadiums will soon be yelling until their throats are raw, trying to cheer on their favorite players to push that ball through the lines of huskies that block the way. We can feel very thankful that while in Europe the crowds are looking fearfully up to the skies and getting ready to dodge into some cellar, in this country the most widespread fear is that the rival school will carry that ball over the goal line.

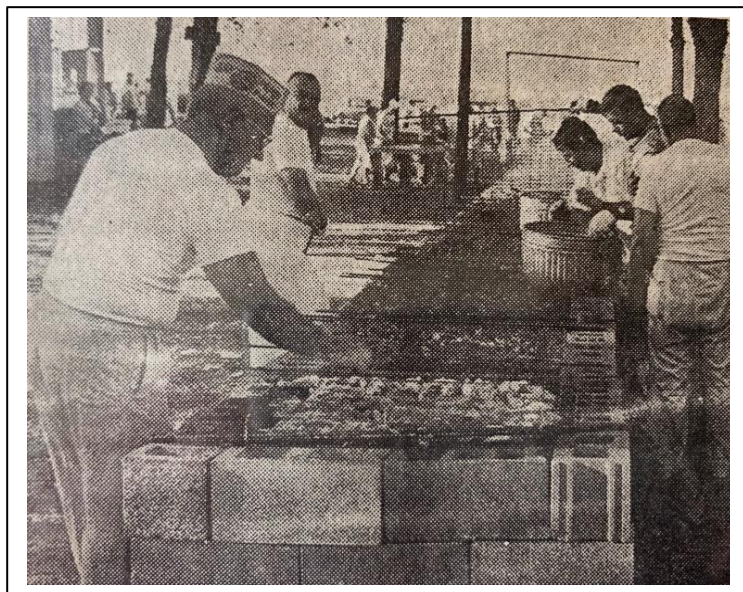
If the favorite quarterback has a sprained ankle and may be out of the game, the gloom on the campus is so thick you could cut it. If the team plays in a forceless and indifferent way, or seems afraid to put its beef back into the attack, a feeling of melancholy spreads through the student body. Even elderly graduates shake their heads gloomily, and say the college spirit is not what it used to be.

Some people say this interest in a mere game is out of proportion. They say it is far more important for a boy to get a high mark in his studies than to make a touchdown. They complain that the high mark is scarcely noted outside his own circles, while the maker of the touchdown has his picture in the papers and columns are written about his achievement.

It is very true that the world does not give enough credit to scholarly achievement. The modern world seems to value a person more for what he does than for what he knows, which has some element of truth in it. The bookish student who has the fine marks does not always accomplish a great deal in life. But at least when the player has run around a line of men fiercely pursuing him, he has shown ability to do something better than his competitors. That is a power that counts tremendously in life. *Ankeny Times, September 22, 1939*

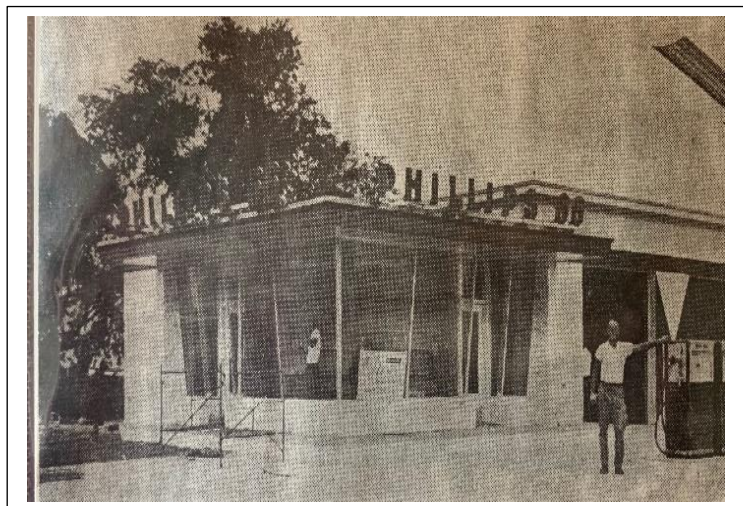


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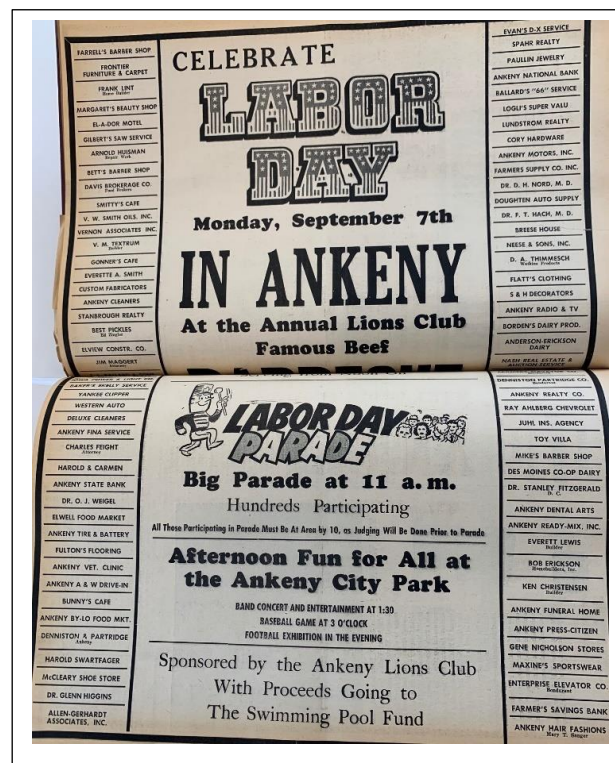
Annual Lions' Barbecue – On the same date: Bob Wilhelm, president of the Ankeny Lions Club, says this year's Labor Day Celebration will be the biggest and best yet, with games, pony rides, and a parade in addition to the famous chicken barbecue to be held at the Wagner Park located just west of Parkview Elementary School.

Ankeny Press Citizen – September 1, 1960



September 1, 1960 has Cecil Ballard, opening his new Phillips66 station at the corner of First Street and Ankeny Blvd. Francis Carr will be his assistant.

Ankeny Press Citizen – September 1, 1960



Ankeny Press Citizen – September 1, 1964

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1960s

Dedicate \$1.2 Million Deere Building



The new \$1.2 million product engineering center at John Deere was dedicated Saturday morning with ceremonies in the cafeteria of the building and a open house. G.R. Sutherland, manager of product engineering introduced the guests and welcomed them on behalf of John Deere. D.W. Brown Deere manager, said the 90,000 square foot center emphasizes the importance Deere places on research and development. Ankeny Mayor Eldon Leonard said: "On behalf of the people of Ankeny, it is truly a pleasure to be here on the twentieth anniversary of a great and wonderful friendJohn Deere. This site of industrial progress and accomplishment is one of the biggest assets our city of Ankeny has to boast about....and believe me when I say we do boast about our fine neighbor....John Deere." *Ankeny Press Citizen – September 21, 1967*

Ankeny Population Nears 5,900 – The City of Ankeny now has almost 5,900 citizens, preliminary figures from the special census showed Wednesday. The total as of Wednesday was 5,875 but this is expected to go higher when final figures are released in two or three weeks, according to Kermit Thorsland, special census supervisor. This compares with 2,964 in the 1960 census.

The tremendous growth of Ankeny in the last 25 years can be seen in the census figures since 1940. That year, Ankeny had a population of 779. In 1950 it had increased to 1,126 then the population almost tripled to 2,964 in 1960. And, Ankeny has almost doubled its growth in the last five years. The new census, authorized by action taken by the Iowa Legislature during the last session, is expected to increase local revenues approximately \$35,000 through additional liquor and road-use taxes. *Ankeny Press Citizen – September 9, 1965*

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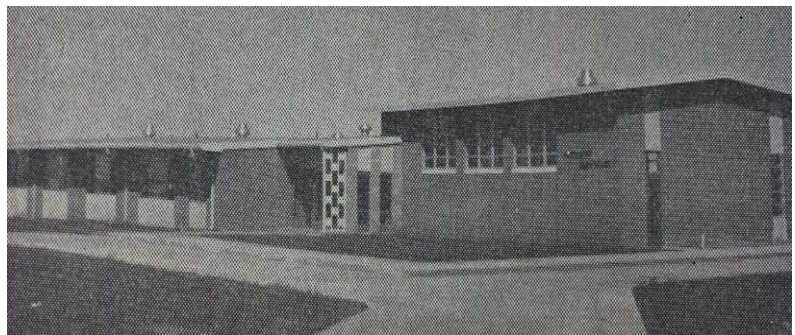
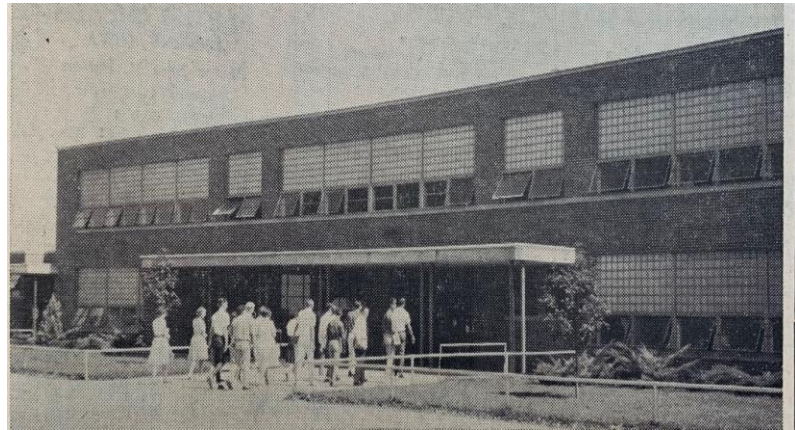


1960s

Original Parkview Elementary

Becomes Senior High – The Parkview Elementary School, First and Pleasant Streets, became the Ankeny Senior High School as classes opened here on Monday. Built in 1951, the structure was originally built for an elementary unit, but housed the gymnasium for the high school. Last year, the Board of Education elected to make some additions to the building and convert it into a high school. The north wing, which was completed in 1957, will still serve as a elementary unit and will be known as Parkview Elementary. The building on School Street will house grades four, five, six and the junior high, the junior high building being known as Neveln Junior High.

Wayne Begg, high school principal, said that the change went very smoothly the first day despite the fact that the bell system had not as of yet been completed. *Ankeny Press Citizen* – September 3, 1964



Open House Sunday at Northwest Elementary – Shown above is the new Northwest Elementary School in Ankeny. The building was opened for students in September and an open house and official opening will be held next Sunday, September 23, beginning at 2 p.m. The school was built for a cost of \$186,783 or \$12.65 per square foot. It consists of nine classrooms, a multipurpose room, nurse's office, secretary and principal's office, a supply room, and restrooms. At present there are 275 students attending the new school building-two kindergarten classes, three first grade classes, three second grade classes, and two third grade classes. *Ankeny Press Citizen* – September 23, 1962

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Local School Enrollment Up – Supt. Keith Hopkins has announced that school enrollment in the Ankeny Schools has increased by 95 over last year's enrollment. The total enrollment for the 1962-63 school year is 1,588. Of these 1,588 students, 699 go to Parkview; 275 at Northwest; 236 in junior high, 378 in high school, and 12 in special education.

Kindergarten – 175

First grade – 158

Second grade – 141

Third grade – 114

Fourth grade – 135

Fifth grade – 127

Sixth grade – 112

Special Education – 12

Seventh grade – 124

Eighth grade – 112

Ninth grade – 101

Tenth grade – 118

Eleventh grade – 86

Twelfth grade - 73

Ankeny Press Citizen – September 13, 1962



Annual Band Festival Saturday – Marching band members who will be among those participating in the Ankeny Marching Band Festival to be held Saturday at 7:30 p.m. on the high school football field are: (from L to R) Sue Stelpflug, Mike Beach, Pedy Pederson, Melvin McCleary and Kay Sargent. The festival will feature bands from Carlisle, Saydel, Urbandale, Johnston, North Polk, Southeast Polk and Ankeny. *Ankeny Press Citizen – September 30, 1965*

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Ankeny Press Citizen
– September 7, 1962



Hawks Open Season Tomorrow Night – The 1963 football season of the Ankeny Hawks will begin tomorrow night, as they entertain tough Indianola here at 7:30 p.m. Shown above are members of Coach Bob VanderLinden's squad who are slated to see plenty of action. Front row, left to right, Claude Ruffcorn, Terry Pierce, Gene Hill, Ricky Logli, Jason Smith, Mike Martin, Dave Chown, and Randy Bush. In the backfield are Steve Tscherter, Jim Logan, Dave Thompson, Tarry Cory, Bob Peckler, and Ricky Frisk. Coach VanderLinden says he expects one of the toughest games of the season in the opening tilt. *Ankeny Press Citizen* – September 12, 1963

Commission Submits Plan for Widening Part of Ankeny Blvd. – The Ankeny City Council Monday night, agreed to participate in the Iowa Highway Commission's proposal for widening a portion of Highway 69 through the city. The commission presented a proposed participation plan to make the busy street a four-lane highway from north of First Street to south of Third Street. The Council authorized the mayor and clerk to inform the commission that the city would participate to the extent of 10% of the total cost, estimated at \$71,300 by the commission.

The city has been negotiating presently with the commission to have the traffic problem eased, especially at the corner of Highway 69 and Third Street. An estimated 10,000 vehicles per day pass the intersection. *Ankeny Press Citizen* – September 17, 1964

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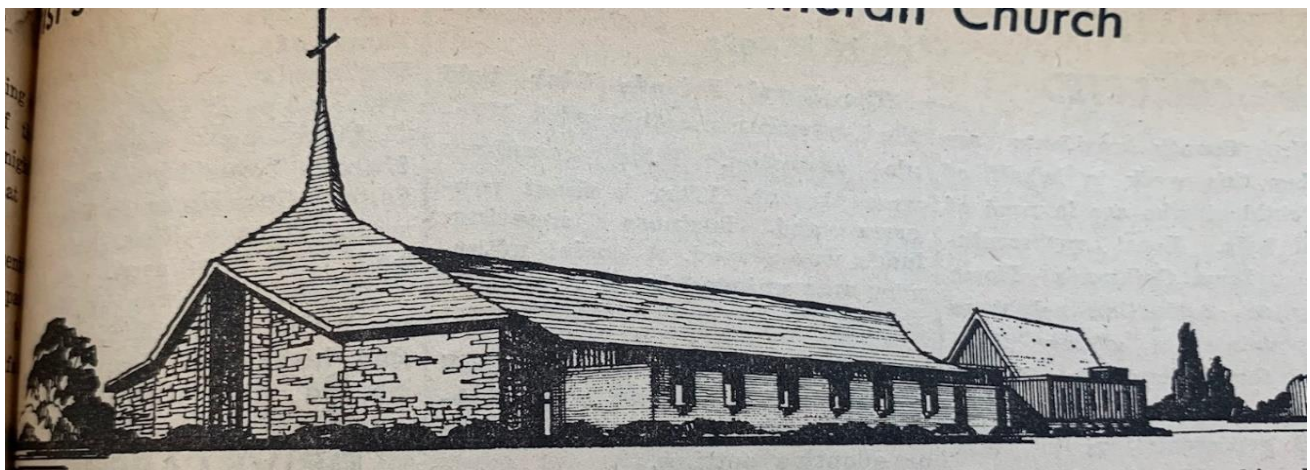
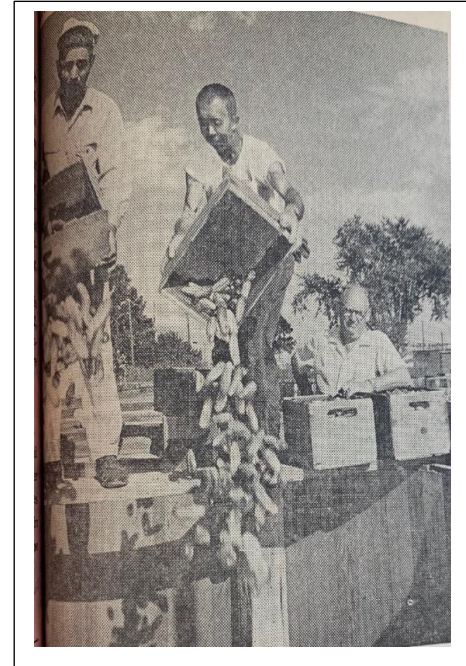
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1960s

Pickle Time - Shown above is right Ed Zingler, owner of Best Pickles Co. of Ankeny as he watches Homer Riddle Greenfield, left, and Truman Johnson, center plant superintendent of Ankeny, dumping pickles into one of 30 pickle tanks at the factory during processing time. Best Pickles Co. is in its 35th year of business, supplying a 60 mile area, with cucumbers being trucked in from various parts of Iowa. "Now is the peak of the pickle season", says Zingler, "and several million gallons of pickles are being cured and packed in quarts, gallons and kegs for distribution principally to restaurants, stores, and institutions." *Ankeny Press Citizen* – September 19, 1963



Artist's Concept of Addition to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church – is shown looking from the northeast of the present church. In addition to the Nave, it will seat 350 persons; the structure will contain a library, conference room, pastor's study, general office, mothers' room and nursery, and primary classrooms. The main seating area will tilt slightly toward the front of the church. It will be joined on the west with the present church, which will be converted into a Fellowship Hall and classrooms. The members of the congregation voted to approve the preliminary plans at a meeting held on Thursday, August 27th and it is hoped that final plans will be ready for bids next month. *Ankeny Press Citizen* – September 4, 1964

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1980s



Construction of a new elementary school and YMCA building in Ankeny is on schedule and within budget, according to Ankeny schools' superintendent Ben E. Norman. The buildings should be completed by next August, he said. Construction, which began in June, was financed by \$7.5 million in bonds, \$3.7 million for the pool and \$4.85 million for the elementary school. Ankeny voters approved the bond issue last November, with 70 percent favoring the school. Though the financing for the swimming pool has come from the school district, the schools will not be responsible for its maintenance. The pool will be leased to the Ankeny YMCA, which will manage it. Michael L. Tebo, executive director of the Des Moines Central YMCA, said the agreement between the Y and the school district is the first of its kind in the United States. *DM Register*, September 7, 1988

Built as an extension of Ankeny High School on North Ankeny Boulevard, the YMCA has met the needs of school athletes as well as community members seeking to develop or maintain a healthy lifestyle. The YMCA Partner with Youth program helps ensure that members of the community facing financial challenges are still able to participate.



In this (undated) photograph, the YMCA takes part in a summer parade. Since September 1989, the Ankeny facility has provided a wealth of programs and activities for all ages, including family and teen events, group classes, aquatics, cardio, and strength training. *Images of America, Ankeny*, Terri A. Deems with the Ankeny Area Historical Society, Arcadia Publishing, 2013

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1980s

Ankeny senior citizens rap city move on center. Senior citizens in Ankeny will continue to protest the city's efforts to give their meeting place to a downtown church, said Ray Blaess, president of the Sixty Plus Club. Blaess, 78, said city officials have not provided for a place for senior citizens to meet if the city deeds its community center to First United Methodist Church. City Council members gave initial approval to a plan to exchange the center for an unspecified number of parking slots at the church on a 3-1 vote Sept. 18. First United Methodist, 206 SW Walnut St., wants to use the building as a youth center. "We're still hoping we get our way," said Blaess. "We figure the senior citizens have more priority than starting a youth group for the Methodist Church." Councilmen John Voigt, Gary Lohmann and Dwight Mollison voted for the proposal of first reading. Two more votes are required, unless the council waives further readings. *DM Register, September 27, 1989*

DM Register, September 1, 1983

Program for children of working parents grows.

Afternoon Connection, an after-school program for first through sixth graders whose parents work, has doubled its enrollment, the school board learned last week. Last year, the program's enrollment was 25; this year it has 50 pupils. Afternoon Connection, which began in 1985, costs \$25 a week and is held at Northwest Elementary School from 2:40 to 6 p.m. each school day. Pupils in the program who attend Ankeny's three other elementary schools are bused to Northwest for free. *DM Register, September 24, 1986*



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Involved: It's the right word for Vance's community life. Ankeny resident Annette Vance maintains an exhausting schedule. A wife and mother, Vance has earned this week's Neighbor of the Week nomination for her numerous activities in the Ankeny area. "Annette is a very organized person," says Keven Koester. "She works extremely well with people and solicits information from her committee members and project workers." Koester, director of Ankeny Community Education, has direct experience with Vance's work, as do many others involved – as Vance is – with the Northeast YMCA. Vance is chairman of the Ankeny Swim Club and the Northeast YMCA Swim team. She is on the Des Moines Aquatics Board, which oversees competitive swimming in the Des Moines area, and is chairman of the Ankeny Indoor Pool Action Committee. Says Vance: "These things I do – it works out fine. I'm home when the kids are home. I think there's a need for families to be together. Swimming is something that she can share with her sons and that contributes to the well-being of her community." *DM Register, September 8, 1983*



Walgreen's store being built in Ankeny. A Walgreens Drug Store will open in Ankeny by the end of the year, according to Abe Wolf, vice president of Buyers Realty Co., which is developing property at 713 N. Ankeny Blvd for the store. A \$1million 21,000-square-foot addition to the Food 4 Less grocery store at 505 N. Ankeny Blvd. will house Walgreens as well as Finesse Imagemakers, already located in Ankeny, apparel store, and a restaurant, said Wolf. Construction of the Ankeny center, being done by Stylesetter Commercial Services Inc., will be completed by December, said Wolf. "We chose Ankeny because it's a sold community and will allow us to more conveniently serve Ankeny and the surrounding rural area," Said Maryellen Kari, spokeswoman for the Chicago-based chain. *DM Register, September 5, 1988*



DM Register, September 26, 1984

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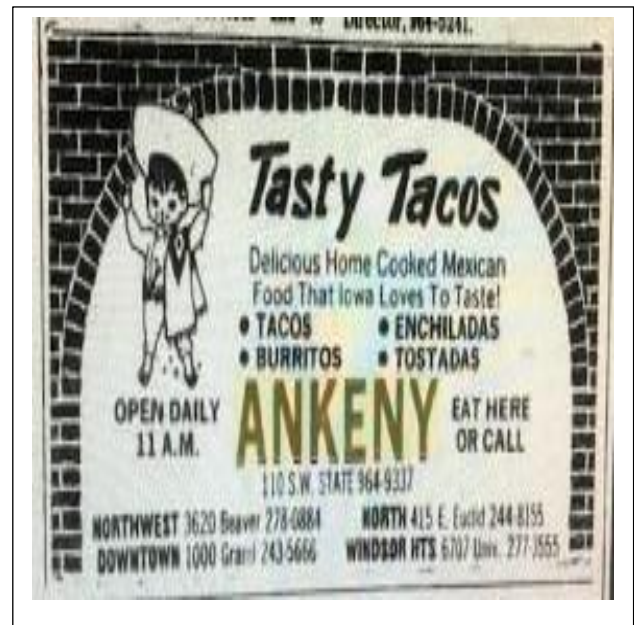
1980s



Retired handyman in Ankeny stays busy in neighborhood. Bob Plunkett of Ankeny, a retired mechanic, often hops on his riding lawn mower and cuts the grass – his neighbors' grass, that is. He also fixes doors and boat motors, helps build garages, cleans fish and passes on his 69 years worth of stories to those residing near him. "I have lived in Ankeny for 13 years and for as long as I can remember Bob has been the epitome of a good neighbor, writes Jim Lynch. "Mr. Plunkett is retired and he shares a wealth of wisdom that only age could bring. From fish stories about the one that got away to tales of the good old days, Bob's stories are funny, education and a joy to hear," writes Lynch in his nomination of "Neighbor of the Week." *DM Register, September 1, 1983*



DM Register, September 28, 1988



DM Register, September 15, 1983

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Hermann dies; Ankeny's "luckiest" man. Richard Hermann, 60, an Ankeny lawyer who possessed seemingly infinite ambition to better his hometown, died of complications from emphysema Thursday at Iowa Lutheran Hospital. "I'm the luckiest man in the world," as he was described as having more friends in Ankeny than anyone. "I'm around the best people in the world, doing the best thing in the world." He did it with remarkable drive. He worked himself through the Drake University Law School and between 1967 and 1989 served in nearly 30 capacities on various civic, charitable and professional organizations, including the Polk County Zoning Board, Ankeny Chamber of Commerce, American Legion, Ankeny Industrial Development Board, and Ankeny airport authority. He also was a candidate for Iowa attorney general in 1974. "He was the most forthright individual I ever met," said Denny Schneider, a longtime friend. "I never saw anybody make friends so fast." His energy sometimes was mistaken for a gruff attitude. "It mattered not to him about finesse. He just got the job done," Ankeny Mayor Ollie J. Weigel said. Added Schneider, "That was a cover. He was a real softie." *DM Register, September 24, 1989*



Thanks to all of you – our Ankeny Area Historical Society members who have supported the museum and its activities over the years. The museum has been closed during the pandemic, but we continue to create Ankeny Through the Decades each month, publish the quarterly newsletter, post on Facebook, and keep the website up to date, so we can stay in contact with you. We hope, after all this passes, you will come visit the museum again! We plan to have new displays – including the Ankeny Championships display – ready for you! Until then, stay safe ... and keep in touch!