

ANKENY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

December 2005 Newsletter

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TWO FALL FUNDRAISERS BENEFIT SOCIETY

Ice Cream Social Treats Visitors Again

Over 200 visitors came hungry and left happy during the 2nd annual Ice Cream Social in September at the Ankeny Historical Society museum.

Again, the call came out for cakes, bars and pies and the members responded with resounding support. The ideal autumn day made the afternoon perfect for treats and conversation on the front lawn of the museum.

Thank you to all who donated and attended our event.



Homebuilders Dinner/Dance/Auction Is Wonderful Success

With nearly 100 in attendance, the Ankeny Homebuilders Association and the Ankeny Historical Society hosted the fall dinner/dance auction at the Vittoria Lodge... raising \$10,000 for the new barn addition.

The delicious meal was provided and donated by Hy-Vee and committees from the Homebuilders and Historical Society got merchant support for the auction items. Both the silent auction and live auction were huge successes and everyone enjoyed the dance following the activities.

A sincere thank you for all those who worked hard on this project and to the merchants that gave so generously.

Pictured at the left is Ankeny Building Association President Pam Davidson presenting the check to Historical Society officers.



Bronze Coin Key Rings For Sale- Silver Centennial Coins Also Available

Key rings are now available for sale at the museum. The rings are made out of bronze coins from the 1975 Ankeny Centennial collection. They are \$3.00 each. Also available are a limited number of the silver coin editions. Both are great for Christmas gift stocking stuffers. Call 965-57-95 to arrange pick-up of both.

Ankeny Barn Preserved Rural Heritage

The following is a reprint of an article with permission from the October 19, 2005 Ankeny Press Citizen. Ober Anderson, a longtime Ankeny resident and Polk County representative of the Iowa Barn Foundation wrote it.

BARN HISTORY

By Ober J. Anderson, Member of Ankeny Area Historical Society and Polk County Representative, Iowa Barn Foundation

By now, many Ankeny residents have seen the barn like structure going up north of the Neveln Center on School Street. Those of us who are in our senior years well understand the role that barns have played in the history of Iowa and the entire country. A recent Des Moines Register article indicated that 70 percent of Iowa citizens over age 65 years have lived on a farm. We all know that the percentage of young people who have lived on a farm is much lower today.

With a strong rural history here in Iowa, it is most fitting that the Ankeny Historical Society select a barn like structure for their new museum. For further information on this project you can call 965-5795 or check the web site at www.ankenyhistorical.org From the time of the first settlers until 1950, the barn was a symbol of a strong and prosperous farm operation. Following World War II, agriculture began to get more specialized with individual buildings for each enterprise rather than a large barn which often housed many different kinds of livestock. These types of buildings are very expensive to construct today. In the early years, it was not uncommon for a family to construct the barn or a shed before building the house. The family would live in corner of the barn or even the chicken house for several months or more until there was enough money and time to build the house.

There are many different kinds of barns. That includes the Dutch Barns of New England, Bank Barns, Crib Barns, Round Barns, Prairie Barns (also called Western Barns) and many others. Most barns constructed west of the Mississippi were of the Western or Prairie style. These were large barns with livestock housed in the lower level and hay storage on the second floor. These

barns have a large door in the peak of the roof for the loading hay into the loft. Some our oldest barns in Iowa are the wooden peg barns, some constructed before the Civil War.

Barns even played an important role in the social life of a farm family. When a barn was in the finishing states, families gathered together for a “barn raising” when lots of energy was needed to lift the rafters into place. Then, later when the barn was completed, a barn dance was held on the floor of the hayloft. Family members from miles around joined in the fun, food and fellowship. All who have grown up on a farm can remember “playing in the barn”. This included digging out caves in the loose hay or building a fort out of hay bales. As a country schoolboy, I recall that the barn was where we first learned to play basketball. When we started feeding the cattle hay, the play area was rather small. Then, by springtime we had access to the entire hay loft area. Yes, even at wintertime temperatures one can warm up during a brisk game of basketball. I never could beat my older brother at playing “horse”.

Since very few barns have been constructed during the past sixty or more years, there is interest in preserving some of these fine old barns as a symbol of the early years of agriculture in our state. The Iowa Barn Foundation was organized in 1997. Their purpose is to encourage and support the preservation of barns to their original condition and style. Matching financial grants are awarded to many projects each year. (Those interested in further information can check out the web site at www.iowabarnfoundation.org.) The Ankeny Historical Society’s “New Barn” will help to preserve our rural heritage.



STEP BY STEP PROGRESS!

Since the spring groundbreaking of the new barn addition the progress has been enjoyable and educational to watch. From the bare ground to the basement to the elevator tower to the majestic roofline and finally, the enclosed structure we see today.

A late winter or early spring occupancy is anticipated



Spring Clean-up Paint-up Planned

Make plans now for a big Spring Clean-up/Fix-up weekend some 4 or 5 short month in the future. With the new structure preparing to open and needing clean up and landscape it will be a double duty weekend as we spruce up the existing museum as well.

Membership Drive Underway

Membership notices are now in the mail and the Ankeny Area Historical Society asks your prompt attention to the annual dues. The Society depends on these funds to defray monthly expenses. Your support is appreciated and we hope that we always serve the public with educational and informative newsletters, enjoyable tours and events.

Locals To Be In Salute to World War II Program on Iowa Public Broadcasting

In March of 2006, IPB TV will be airing a program about World War II. Society members Jeanne Erslund and Tina Battani were interviewed for the program. They told about their experiences of working at the Des Moines Ordnance Plant.



Dave Miller of IPBTV interviews Tina Battani (above) and Jeanne Erslund (below) about the Ordnance Plant.



Decaying Tree Removed from Grounds

A sad farewell for a 200-year old tree this fall as safety and practicality dictated its removal. Located just north and east of the house the tree was deteriorating at a rate that compromised the safety of the house.

Big Creek Players To Perform January 24

Join us at our January 24 meeting as the Big Creek Players present “Polk City, the Early Days.” The play is about George & Hester Beebe, founders of Polk City, reminiscing about their time in Polk City from the time of arrival to their departure for Utah.

Santa’s North Pole Village Good For Society

Another successful Santa’s North Pole Village spelled more funds for the Ankeny Area Historical Society as the volunteers and workers sold refreshments again in 2005. The annual event brings thousands of residents and visitors to shop the crafts and has been a staple for the coffers of many organizations.

Thank you to all whom volunteered and worked the concession stand.

Students Say Thank You

Throughout the year we have many visitors tour our home, but we also take the history of Ankeny to our schools. We would like to share with you a few of the thank you notes sent to two of our members, Joe Morr and Rosemary Hutton Taylor who visited Westwood and Crocker Elementaries.

Dear Joe,

Thank you for coming to our school. We enjoyed having you here. I especially liked when you told us about the history of Ankeny.

From Olivia

Dear Ms Taylor,

Thank you for coming to the class room. I enjoyed (enjoyed) you showing me the map and making me smarter.

Sincerely,
Hannah

Dear Joe

Thank for coming to are scool. We love you coming to are scool. We love you talking to are school. You are a grate talking. Thank you for talking ababout Ankeny for us. Thank you for talking about big Joe your dad. You are welle nise men

Your frened Michael

Dear Joe

Thank you for comeing and pasing the handcuffs. I rilly rilly liked it.

Luke

Dear Mrs. Taylor,

Thank you soo soo much. I've never Knew so much about Ankeny. I love Ankeny. You must Love Ankeny too. You were so good. You were as good as Mrs. Ankerson.!

Love, Emily

Dear Joe

Thank you for taking about your family. And teaching aout hand covse.

Alyssa

Dear Mrs. Taylor,

Thank you for the posed (postcard of the Ankeny train depot). I think it is cool that your mom (Grandmother) made the shels for the amyounishin.

From Katie

Dear Joe

Thank you for teaching as about Ankeny a log log time aug(ago). We all love your story. We all enjoyed it too. How you talked about your lif. Thank you for evrething Joe.

Your friend Kylie

Thank you for the picsher (picture). Thank you for the nolege of Ankeny. Thank you Misses Talore

Sincerely, Nick

Dear Mrs. Taylor

Thank you for the spectacyouler time in oor classroom. It was fun learning historey of Ankeny with you Krieg