

Fall 2014 Newsletter

301 SW Third, PO Box 1111

Ankeny, IA 50021 Phone: 515-965-5795

www.ankenysthistorical.org email: history@ankenysthistorical.org

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TANSTAFL---There Ain't No Such Thing As Free Lunch *Eight Letters And Eight Words That We (Should) All Live by*

Simplebut true. And both of my sons can attest that I have used it many times over the years as an answer to their situations where the effort seems extreme, mundane, unnecessary or unpleasant.

It also is a great lesson to live by if you are running a business, a museum or a neighborhood garage sale. While you cannot necessarily always measure results with effort....most of the time it does reflect that those that work the hardest reap the greatest rewards. And in this newsletter I want to explain to our membership and guest-readers our efforts, the results and what our needs are for the future.

Although it looks like our house and museum have been in this location forever....it has really been just 20 years since the house was rescued from demolition, moved four blocks and put onto a newly dug basement. It has been 10 years since we broke ground for the barn addition to our campus. In addition to having the thousands of artifacts now cataloged, displayed and enjoyed over the past years...we have continued to repair and improve the products that protect them.

While we are not on anybody's annual budget--such as the city, the county or state...The Ankeny Area Historical Society has annually raised funds from businesses, individuals, organizations as well as from events like SummerFest, cookie sales, pumpkin sales, ice cream socials and membership drives. We raise the money for the most practical of purposes: to pay our monthly expenses. It is not cheap to run a museum. Besides our initial outlay to move and refurbish the house 20 years ago (\$100,000) we then raised the \$680,000 to build the barn to specifications that would ensure generations of Ankenians could enjoy seeing and experiencing the roots of Ankeny...the coal mines, the farmsteads, the Ordnance plant, the schools and the traditions that have made Ankeny the great town that it is today.

In addition to those two major items, please take note of the following items that crop-up every- once- in- awhile...it is an interesting read:

- ✓ **house painted numerous times--house sided recently**
- ✓ **house interior re-plastered**
- ✓ **new windows in the house**
- ✓ **west steps replaced**
- ✓ **handicap ramp installed**
- ✓ **east porch repaired**
- ✓ **back-up gas generator to assure sump-pump during power outages**
- ✓ **2 touch screens and one large screen for viewing interviews**
- ✓ **updated copier and computer**
- ✓ **elevator repairs**
- ✓ **furnace(s) repairs**

And these things are in addition to our monthly bills reflecting: insurance, water, heat and air, maintenance of same, postage, phones, water, sewer.....or about \$29,000.00 per year. (continued on page 2)



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So, TANSTAF! That is a lot of cookies, ice cream, memberships, pumpkins and other methods of earning an income for our monument to the past. And frankly, we need your help. As we reach the end of 2014 and we send out membership requests, please keep us in mind for anything extra that you could invest with us. Your return on investment will be the pride in the prize jewel of Ankeny that the museum really is. It is also knowing that you are part of one of the greatest stories of the one of the greatest communities in the state....nah, in the country!

So, add another zero if you can to the check, toss in a few bucks if that is better...but anything will help and everything will be appreciated. Also, indicate again if you would like to help on landscape upkeep, quarterly cleaning days, Sunday tour assistance, baking cookies or serving ice cream. It all counts-- because without you, we would not be here.

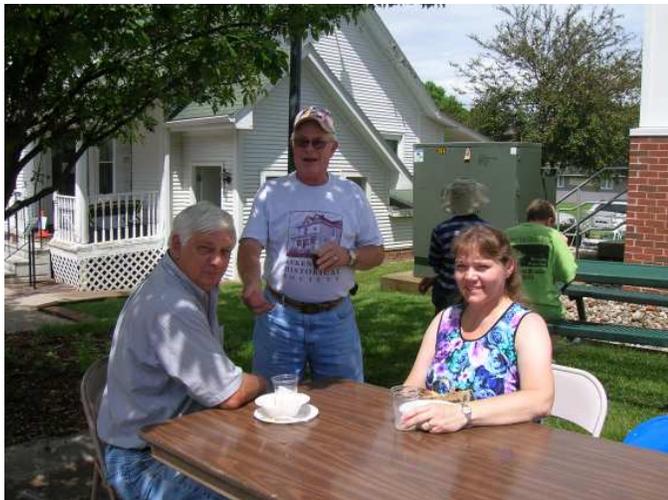
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Ron Sampson

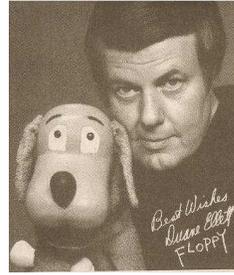


Soggy Start But Ice Cream Social Still A Pretty Sweet Event

Neither rain, nor wind nor . . . anything else can really stop the annual Ice Cream Social at the Ankeny Area Historical Society in June. However, it can cause some heartburn as tables and chairs are moved in . . . then out . . . then in again . . . all in good humor as volunteers and guests refueled on the flavors of the day in the dishes of ice cream, cakes, pies, cookies and bars.



Floppy Is Coming This Spring



Finally, Floppy will be coming home . . . to Ankeny.

After a stint visiting at the Iowa Historical Museum in downtown Des Moines . . . a few stops at the Iowa State Fair . . . Iowa's favorite beagle puppy will be home this spring at the Ankeny Area Historical Society's barn. While he and his dog house/box are undergoing some preservation techniques to ensure his continued health, the plans and groundwork are being worked on for a welcome home party this spring or summer of 2015.

Stay tuned.

Cookie Sale Just Around The Corner



Norma Righi's famous holiday cookie sale is just around the corner, December 6. And while it is never a challenge to get the Christmas goodies out the door to adoring buyers . . .

we can use more product. If you want to contribute some cookies, kringla or any other holiday goodie that looks good on a holiday plate . . . or if you want your tickets that allows you to purchase a collection of the confections . . . call today—965-5795.



House Siding Project Completed

After several coats of paint over the past 100 + years, the house portion of our museum complex is now handsomely covered in a beautiful and weather-efficient siding that should give many, many years of maintenance-free protection from the elements. Along with the recently installed energy efficient windows, the new materials will make our utility bills more reasonable and be more protection from extreme temperatures for our treasured exhibits. Thanks to all for the fundraising efforts the past two years to get it done. A special thank to Polk County Supervisors for Polk County Community Betterment grant money in 2013 and 2014 and thank you to our county supervisor Steve Van Oort.



Barn Gets A New Coat . . .of Paint

Thanks to Sherwin-Williams on Douglas Ave in Des Moines 20 gallons of A-100 satin white paint, a \$500 value was donated to give the barn a new coat of paint. The painting was done by Steve Moulton and company of Ankeny. Thanks guys, it looks great.

Thank You For Your Time, Talent And Treasures

Not only do we need money to keep the museums open, but we also need volunteers. A special thank you to all who volunteer to make the historical society a special place on the inside and outside. To our lawnmowers who makes the yard look great even though the rain keeps coming. Thank you to the weed eaters. Your hours and hours of keeping the yard the best looking in town does not go unappreciated. Thank you to those who are willing to give up a Sunday so that we can share our heritage with others during our open houses. And all those that help out at special open houses such as "Night at the Museum." Thank you to the Collection Committee for cataloging and displaying the artifacts that are donated. Special thank you to our handymen who do odd jobs and maintenance around the museums that otherwise who cost the historical society money. To all who volunteer to help with our fundraisers.

If we have left anyone out, we apologize. It is because all these wonderful volunteers that the Ankeny Area Historical Society is such a great place. THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

Bert O'Keen Opens Hardware Store in 1910

This photo is just one of the many you will find in the *Images of America—Ankeny* book sold by the historical society.



Bert O'Keen opened his store on the northwest corner of SW Third and SW Walnut Street. Below is what is written about O'Keen in the *History of Des Moines and Polk County Iowa* published in 1911.

Although he has been identified only a short time with the mercantile business at Ankeny, Bert O'Keen has demonstrated his ability as a hardware man and is meeting with a gratifying measure of prosperity. He is a native of Johnson county, Iowa, born June 11, 1868, a son of Oliver J. and Drusilla (McCord) O'Keen. The parents were both born in the Keystone state and came to Johnson county, Iowa, many years ago, removing to Polk county about 1873. The father devoted his attention to farming. He died in 1909, at the age of eighty-two years, the mother having been called away in 1901. in the sixty-fifth year of her age.

Bert O'Keen was the third in order of birth in a family of four children. He received his preliminary education in the public schools and at the age of fifteen began his contest with the world. He worked for wages on a farm for about twelve years, then engaged in railroading and subsequently in the restaurant and livery business at different times, acquiring practical experience which he has put to good use, so that today he is one of the substantial business men of this section. In March, 1910. he opened a hardware store at Ankeny and as he is well acquainted with the wants of his patrons and keeps his shelves well filled with the best articles of hardware that the market affords, his income shows from month to month a handsome increase.

In April, 1899, Mr. O'Keen was united in marriage to Miss Hattie Hall, who was born November 12, 1876, a daughter of W. a. and Mary Ann (Shepard) Hall. The parents were born in Pennsylvania and settled in Polk county, Iowa, being now residents of Ankeny. There were four children in their family. The home of Mr. and Mrs. O'Keen has been brightened by the arrival of one child, Vera Florence, who was born May 4, 1907.

Fraternally Mr. O'Keen is identified with the Odd Fellows and politically gives his support to the republican party. He and his wife are stanch members of the Methodist church in Ankeny. In every enterprise for the good of the community he cheerfully lends his aid and being now in the prime of life, it is reasonable to prophesy that he has before him many years of happiness and increasing usefulness.

Mr. O'Keen died in 1940 and was buried in the Oralabor Cemetery. His daughter Vera was a member of the Ankeny High Class of 1925.

Tornado Exhibit Marks 40 Years Since The Storm

The news clippings from 40 years ago are wall to wall in the barn museum recalling that horrific night of Ankeny's only killer tornado back in 1974. Visitors have been coming in all summer to see the photos and stories that capture the night of June 18 and the days and weeks that followed as Ankeny repaired and reloaded for the growth days ahead. As a community of about 9,000 at the time of the storm, Ankeny has now grown by the about 41,000 in the past 40 years.



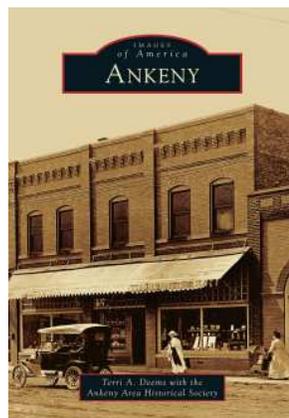
Seventh Graders Again Look & Learn

For the umpteenth year, members of the Ankeny Area Historical Society took a week out of their lives to welcome Ankeny's seventh graders for a day of education and information last spring. The annual outing gives the young scholars a chance to learn about Ankeny's past and how the building blocks of agriculture and rail service started and sustained Ankeny 135 years ago. They also learn about how the Ordnance Plant—now John Deere—catapulted Ankeny from a sleepy town of 700 folks to a buzzing community that hosted 20,000 workers a day at the plant as they manufactured 8 million cartridges a day during WWII.



Images of America—Ankeny

Want a good book to read this winter? Try the *Images of America—Ankeny* book.



Full of pictures, history and information about Ankeny.

Books are available at the historical society for \$22. For members, each additional book purchased is \$11.

They will make great Christmas gifts!

DATES TO REMEMBER

**Oct. 23—Halloween In Uptown—
5 to 7 p.m. Bring your kids, grandkids to
Trick or Treat at Uptown Businesses**

Oct. 28—Monthly Meeting—7:00 p.m.

Nov. 2 —Open House—2 to 4 p.m.

Nov. 25—Monthly Meeting—2:00 p.m.

**Dec. 6—Christmas Cookie Sale—
11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Tickets pre-sold. \$13 for 2 dozen cookies
Candy will be sold, too!**

**Dec. 6—Santa's Treasure Hunt—
Noon—3 p.m.**



Santa's Treasure Hunt Starts At The Barn

*Come have your
picture taken
with Santa and
Mrs. Claus on
December 6
from noon to 3
p.m. by Jamison
Studios. Then
get your lucky*

*token and go to the businesses in Uptown to see
what gift you have one.*

*Horse drawn wagon rides will also be held from
noon to 3 p.m. Pick-up and drop off at Hykes
Furniture and the Historical Society.*

*All activities are paid for by the Uptown Associ-
ation and are free to the public.*

The Ankeny Area Historical Society is estab-
lished to collect and secure artifacts and historical
records representing Alleman, Ankeny, Bondurant,
Carney, Elkhart, Enterprise, Polk City, and Shel-
dahl for the purpose of preserving American Herit-
age

301 S. W Third Street, P.O. Box 1111
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