

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received DEC 12 1980

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Gully Homestead

and/or common Gully Homestead

2. Location

street & number 200 S. Chambers Rd.

n/a not for publication

city, town Aurora

n/a vicinity of

state Colorado

code 08

county Arapahoe

code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Aurora

street & number 1470 S. Havana St.

city, town Aurora

n/a vicinity of

state Colorado

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Arapahoe County Courthouse

street & number 5334 S. Prince St.

city, town Littleton

state Colorado

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Aurora Historic Preservation  
Inventory, Volume I

has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1978

federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Colorado Historical Society, OAHP, 1300 Broadway

city, town Denver

state Colorado 80203

# 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date 1978, 1983

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Gully Homestead House is located on the southern edge of the Bresnahan Ranch Complex, which lies just northeast of the intersection of East Alameda and South Chambers Road in Aurora. The homestead house faces south, with a small stable situated to the southeast, the only other structure moved from the original site. The setting is rural, located on 137 acres owned by the city of Aurora and preserved in its natural state. Willows, cottonwoods, wildflowers, and wild grasses cover the surrounding area. Tollgate Creek passes to the east of the site, and the Highline Canal runs just south of the homestead house.

The Gully House is a single detached, frame dwelling with gabled roof, and a T-shaped plan. The one and a half story front portion features a central entrance flanked by windows on either side. The windows are wood frame, double-hung, six over six sash. Each of the gable walls contain one ground floor window and one smaller loft window. The front door is wood frame, with plain surrounds.

The shed-roofed front porch extends across the full width of the facade and is supported by slender wood columns with plain caps and bases. There are three single brick chimneys: one on the north end and used for the cooking stove; one on the west end; and one on the east end. There are no fireplaces in the structure.

The one-story rear section features a gabled roof, a door and a six over six sash window on the west side, and a small window identical to the loft windows and another door on the east side. The uncovered porch on the west wall has a wood plank floor. A sleeping porch (date of construction unknown) on the east side was not reconstructed.

There are three rooms and a loft on the interior. Where possible, the original lath and plaster walls have been restored, and each room has been painted in what was determined to be original colors. Each room features wood floors, molded baseboards, and tongue-and-groove beaded board ceilings. The kitchen ceiling, located in the one-story rear section, is arched, and the window on the east side has built-in shelves and batten shutters. When the sleeping porch was attached to the east side, this window served as an interior opening. Cabinets are attached to the north wall. There are wood doors leading to each room and a stairway leads to the unfinished loft area through a separate door.

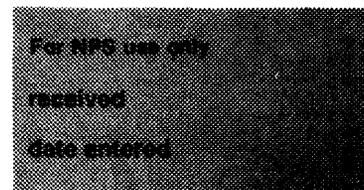
The stable is a simple square structure with a flat roof, vertical board siding, and a plain door. There are no windows. A trough is the only interior feature.

The original setting of the ranch was at East Mississippi and South Chambers Road, about two miles directly south of the current location. The house sits facing the same direction as its original location and in relation to the same road and Tollgate Creek.<sup>1</sup> There were no significant outbuildings remaining on the original site other than the stable and corrals. The corrals were not salvagable. The stable was moved and placed in the same orientation as it was originally to the main house (southeast of the front of the house). The house was moved using the I-beam and roller method on a flatbed truck (see #8 for a more detailed description). The residence and stable suffered no damage as a result of the move.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

Gully Homestead, Arapahoe County, Colorado



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

The house has been restored to the earliest known date of construction--1871. (Linen strips and a 1870 German newspaper used for insulation found during the restoration were of assistance in verifying the construction date.) Old photographs aided in the project, particularly in the reconstruction of the porches.

The exterior was in poor condition following years of neglect, necessitating replacement of some historic fabric. The majority of the clapboards on the east wall of the house are original, while those on the west side had to be replaced. The original foundation was of sandstone from Tollgate Creek, and although building codes prevented use of a similar foundation on the new site, sandstone from the creek was used to edge the concrete base on which the house sits. Two of the window frames are original, with the others designed to match. The doors were milled to replicate the originals, which had not survived, but were revealed in historic photographs. Old brick identical to the original were used in those areas in the chimney in need of repair.

None of the original porches survived; however photographic evidence and ghost lines on the facades revealed their location and configuration. There had been two front porches, successively, with the earliest porch selected for replication. One of the upright porch supports was discovered in the house and was used as a model for the construction of the other columns. The sleeping porch on the east wall was not reconstructed due to evidence that it was a late addition, and because no photographic evidence existed to provide clues to its appearance.

The original hardware on some of the doors, locks and cabinets existed, and, where missing, were replaced with old hardware purchased to match. Some hinges survived, and reproductions of original period hinges were also used.

The original plan of the interior has survived intact, as has much of the original fabric, including the walls, flooring and ceiling material.

<sup>1</sup>The stable was not originally part of the Gully Homestead, but part of the Tollgate School which was adjacent to the Gully property. When the school closed early in the 20th century, the Gullys acquired the structure and moved it to their property. It has not been altered.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

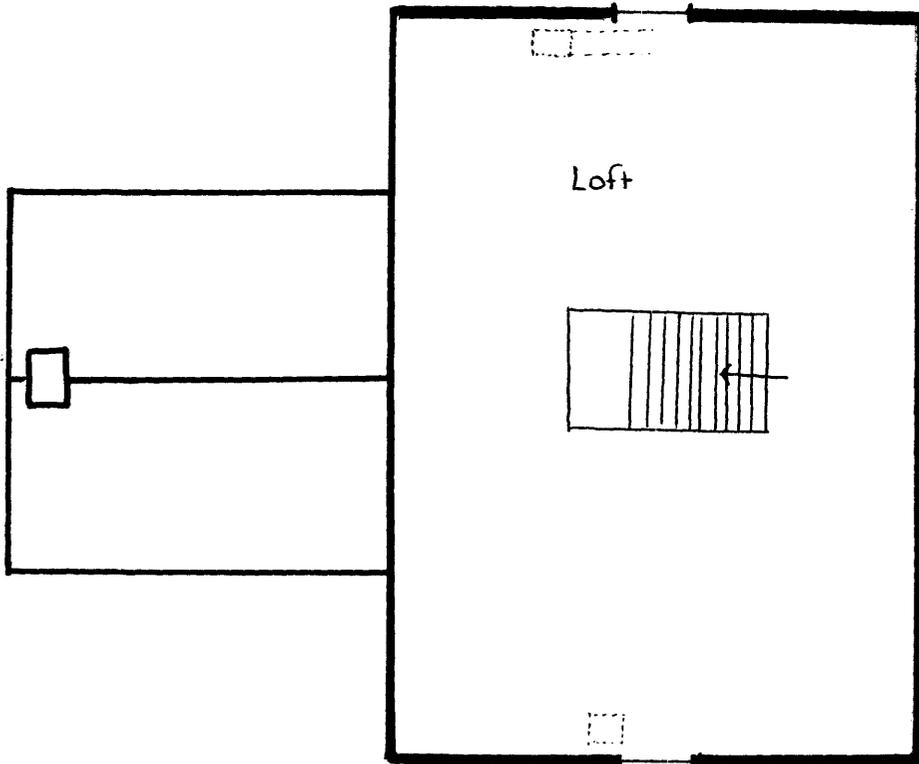
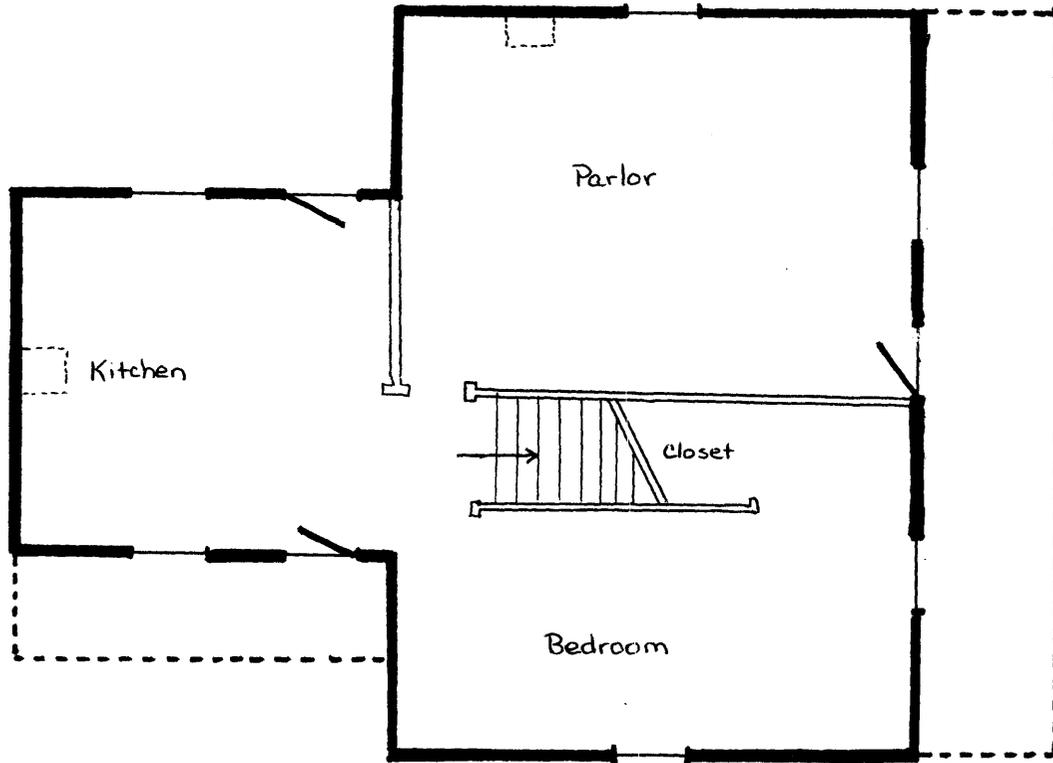
Continuation sheet

Gully Homestead

Item number

7

Page 3



# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1870–1871 **Builder/Architect** unknown

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Gully Homestead, the oldest known dwelling in Aurora, is significant as the most important surviving historic resource associated with the early agricultural period of the city's history. It was homesteaded and owned for many years by the Gully family, among the earliest settlers of Aurora.

Aurora's history dates back to the 1890s, with its economy initially based on agriculture. However, significant growth caused by the influx of the military during the 1920s and 1940s, and the business and residential growth of the 1970s and 1980s, has left but a few remnants of the city's agricultural beginnings. (Aurora is one of the fastest growing communities in the United States with a 1985 population of 208,000, compared to 70,000 in 1970--an increase of more than 111%.)

Early development of the region was associated with the fur trade and early transportation along the various trails, four of which passed through this area. Stage stations were located close to the Gully property for many years. Many of the first settlers, disillusioned with the promise of wealth in the mining camps, elected to settle on the plains near Denver and farm. With the arrival of the railroad in 1870 and the influx of European investors, the farm land in what is now Aurora was quickly settled. Encouraged and recruited by English investment companies, many Irish, Scottish, and English farmers moved to the Aurora area to homestead, either on leased land or on land they themselves homesteaded.

Thomas and Temperance Teresa Gully came to America from Ireland around 1862. According to Stone's History of Colorado, the family spent some time in the mining camps of Central City, Blackhawk, and Silver Plume before settling at Tollgate Creek in Aurora. The family included Bridget, the oldest daughter who had married John Delaney in Ireland; Jane, married to John Slattery; Edward, married to Della; Thomas, married to Margaret; James; and John who married Elizabeth Clifford.

Thomas built the family home in about 1870–71, building the one-room portion in 1870 and the two-story addition in 1871. According to the 1870 census, Thomas owned the farm which was valued at 500 dollars. His sons Thomas, Edward, James, and John lived on the farm although they are not listed as working with their father. In 1879 Thomas, Sr., officially filed for a homestead on the property that included the house. In the 1880 census, only Thomas and John were still at home and were listed as working the farm with their father. By October of that year Thomas, Sr., had died leaving the property to his wife Temperance. In 1883 she applied for a homestead on the land and immediately deeded the land to Thomas, Jr.

In 1885 Thomas, Jr., deeded the property to his younger brother John. From that time, he, his wife Elizabeth and their children held the property. The children of John, 1850–1915, and Elizabeth, 1866–1927, were Mary, 1893–1977, who later married John O'Brien; James E., 1896–1962; two children who didn't survive childhood; John T., 1900–1953; William, 1902–1952; and Elizabeth A., 1904–1950. The four younger children lived on the farm until their deaths. Elizabeth married a Mr. Mann, and their daughter Betty Mann Sala was the final owner of the house before it was acquired by the City of Aurora in 1978.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Aurora History Center, Aurora, CO, Gully Homestead Collection,  
Aurora History Center, Aurora, CO, Donna M. Halsey and Nancy J. Graham, "Gully  
Homestead Report."

McFadden, Carl Vincent, et al. Early Aurora, Aurora, CO: Aurora Technical Center, 1978

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 1 1/4 acre

Quadrangle name Fitzsimons

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

### UTM References

A 

1	3	5	1	6	3	8	0	4	3	9	5	6	4	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H 

Zone		Easting				Northing								

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at a point where the Highline Canal intersects with the east side of S. Chambers Road (Pt. C); thence due north 200' along the east side of S. Chambers; thence due east 200' to the west bank of Tollgate Creek; thence south 400' to the north side of the

(continued)

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah J. Pearce, Consultant

organization date September 13, 1985

street & number 888 S. Dexter, #710 telephone (303) 691-0187

city or town Denver state Colorado

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Barbara Sudler

title State Historic Preservation Officer date November 27, 1985

### For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register  
Entered in the  
National Register

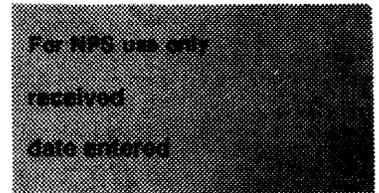
for Nelson Bryan date 1/9/86  
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Gully Homestead

Item number 8

Page 2

During the time the Gullys owned the house, it was a center for family and community activity. Thomas had a moderately successful ranching operation. John is remembered for selling horses to delivery companies in the Denver area. While the farm fell on hard times after John's death, the children managed to keep it by ranching and running a rodeo from the 1920s through the 1950s. Both of Mary O'Brien's sons lived at the farm at various times, and Elizabeth Mann came back to have her daughter Betty born in the house. After Elizabeth's death, Betty's uncles raised her. In addition to being a center for family activity, the house served as a polling place for elections for the Tollgate School District. At various times, John was president of the district and Elizabeth was his secretary.

The Gully house stood vacant until 1978 when it was determined that the building sat on a 100-year flood plain and was directly in the path of a proposed runoff canal. The owners of the property at the time, Medema Homes, Inc., decided to give the building to the city of Aurora with the provision that it be moved to a new location. Later that year, the house and stable were moved to Heritage Park next to the Justice Center on East Alameda Drive. The house was relatively easy to move because of its size, and the mover used the I-beam and roller method on a flatbed truck. The house stood on a concrete foundation in Heritage Park for several years.

Following the 1982 purchase of the Delaney (Bresnahan) Ranch by the City, it was decided to move the Gully house to a site on the southern edge of the Delaney ranch.<sup>1</sup> The move was completed in 1983 by the same mover used in 1978. Since that time, the house has been completely restored and plans may allow reconstruction of some of the corrals as part of a proposed Gully-Delaney natural and historical agricultural complex. The Gully house and stable are placed 150 feet from the Delaney buildings and are visually interjected as a separate complex. The Gully home and stables face south--away from the Delaney house which faces west toward Chambers Road. The house could not have been placed further east because it would have violated the city floodplain.

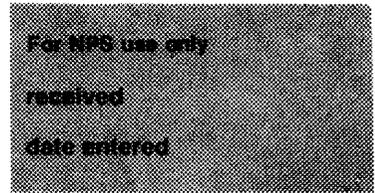
The Gully house has been restored to the earliest known date--1871. Overall, the majority of the original fabric of the structure is intact. In areas where the original material was not salvagable, samples were retained and used as models for the reconstruction. Some materials from more recent alterations, such as linoleum from the kitchen floor, were also retained.

A 1985 survey of Aurora revealed that this home is the oldest dwelling within the city limits. Rapid development has all but eliminated the agricultural remains of Aurora. Only the Gully and Delaney properties survive as representatives of the agricultural heritage of Aurora.

<sup>1</sup>It was decided not to include the Delaney complex in this nomination because the main house, built in 1911, is not architecturally or historically significant, and because many of the outbuildings were moved onto the property during the 1940s.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Gully Homestead

Item number 9

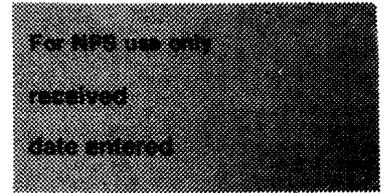
Page 2

Mehls, Steven F., Carol Drake, and James E. Fell, Jr. Aurora: Gateway to the Rockies. Evergreen, CO.: Cordillera Press, 1985.

Steinel, Alvin T. History of Agriculture in Colorado. Fort Collins, CO.: Colorado State Agricultural College, 1926.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Gully Homestead, Arapahoe Co, Colorado Item number 10

Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description (continued)

Highline Canal; thence northwesterly along the north side of the Highline Canal to the point of beginning (Pt. C).

Boundary Justification

The boundaries were drawn to include the homestead house and stable, and to allow for sufficient acreage identifying the resource as an agricultural property located in a rural setting. A natural boundary on the east and the road on the west correspond to boundaries of the property's original site. The Highline Canal forms a natural boundary to the south, and the northern boundary was drawn to exclude the Delaney (Bresnahan) property due to its lack of architectural and historical significance.



Gully Homestead

1 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Sally Pearce

May 20, 1985

Negatives: Aurora History Center

Gully House looking north



Gully Homestead

Arapahoe County, Colorado

2 of 9

Photographer: Sally Pearce

May 20, 1985

Negatives: Aurora History Center

Gully House looking southwest



Gully Homestead

3 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Sally Pearce

August 13, 1985

Negatives: Aurora History Center

Gully House looking east



Gully Homestead 4 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Sally Pearce

Negatives: Aurora History Center

August 13, 1985

Gully House looking east



Gully Homestead . 5 of 9  
Arapahoe County, Colorado  
Photographer: Sally Pearce  
August 13, 1985  
Negatives: Aurora History Center  
Wood shed, Gully Homestead, looking N



Big UGLY

HY-496

Gully Homestead

6 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Unknown

November, 1978

Negatives: Aurora History Center

House being moved to Justice Center

Looking East



Gully Homestead

7 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Virginia Steele

April, 1981

House on foundation at Justice Center

Looking east

Negatives: Aurora History Center



Gully Homestead

8 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Unknown

Date unknown by prior to 1978

Original site of homestead

Negatives: Aurora History Center



Gully Homestead 9 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Sally Pearce

May 20, 1985

Negatives: Aurora History Center

Homestead House and Delaney Complex

Looking southwest