

The Advocate Newsletter

Volume 42; Number 7; January 2018

Aurora Historical Society

Aurora, Colorado



Embrace your city, your past

January President's Letter

Thank you all so very much for your kind thoughts this past couple of months as I start to get back to *normal*? I can't tell you how much I appreciate our officers for stepping in and keeping this terrific organization going, thank you all. I understand our guest speaker for the Sept. meeting John Barry presenting "Wings Over the Rockies," was fascinating, and everyone really enjoyed the presentation. We will kick off 2018 with our annual Pot Luck, January 30, at the Aurora History Museum, 6PM, featuring a program on Mary Elitch presented by Teri Johnson. The Historical Society will provide Ham and Chicken, and side dishes would be most welcome. If you have questions please call Nadine Caldwell 303-364-2859. We look forward to seeing you on the 30th.

Election of Officers will also be held that evening.

In March, also at the Aurora History Museum, we will have a presentation by Jack Stone, Author, Actor and Western Historian, who will speak about "The Seamy Side of Denver City". Come and find out about the Denver you never knew.

Wishing you and yours a very Happy New Year!

Sandy Sweeney, President

Historical Society Officers

President: Sandy Sweeney (303-854-4249)

Vice President: Nadine Caldwell

Secretary: Dolly Gray

Treasurer: Michael Lockwood

Directors: Dexter Harding, Carolyn Brassell

Membership: Larry Wilterdink

Hospitality: Caroline Brassell

Historian: Michael Lockwood

Newsletter, Website, & Publicity: Lynne Evans 303-671-0874

Program Committee: Dolly Gray, Lynne Evans, Sandy Sweeney, Carolyn Brassell

Education- Vacant

If anyone is interested, please contact Sandy Sweeney @ 303-854-4249 or Livelyline@aol.com



Our Annual Potluck Meeting and Dinner will be on **Tuesday, January 30th at 6:00pm at the Aurora History Museum.** Teri Johnson will present a program in costume as Mary Elitch for our entertainment. So, bring a dish to share and come join us. AHS will supply ham, chicken, & beverages.

In March, Jack Stone, author, actor, and Western historian will present a program on "The Seamy Side of Denver City." So, **join us at 7pm at the Aurora History Museum on March 27th.**

May 2018 TBA: Plains Conservation Center Tour and Hayride



IT'S TIME TO PAY YOUR 2018 MEMBERSHIP DUES

On **January 1, 2018**, it is time to send your dues payments for year 2017 to Michael Lockwood, 1629 Galena St., Aurora, CO 80010. Our membership dues come due in January each year now and with the New Year arriving please send your dues payment.

Memberships	
Family	\$15.00
Contributing	\$30.00
Business/Corporate	\$200.00
Life	\$200.00
Newsletter mailing	\$5.00

Because of the increased costs of postage and printing, we are asking that you add \$5.00 to your membership cost if you wish to have the newsletter mailed to you.



Remembering Aurora

Michael Lockwood, Aurora Historical Society

An Aurora native, a graduate of the Aurora Public Schools (Vaughn Elementary, North Middle School & Aurora Central High School) and still living less than 2 miles from where I grew up, Aurora has been a big part of my life ever since I was born. Having grown up here, I have several memories that I'd love to provide for your reading pleasure via The Advocate newsletter. For those of you who have Aurora connections that go back as far as the 1950's the recollections presented may bring back waves of nostalgia. And while I have 60 years of memories to relate, if you have some stories you'd like to share, please feel free to contact us at the Aurora Historical web site: www.auroracohistoricalsociety.org

REMEMBERING: Fitzsimons Golf Course

I wish I could tell you that I grew up playing golf at Fitzsimons (built in 1918). Truth is, I didn't pick up the sport until 2004. But my first lesson and exposure to the game came at Fitzsimons. Living a mere 3 minutes away made it the perfect place to refine my skills. Oh wait, 13 years later and they still aren't refined. But that's not the fault of Fitzsimons golf course. For those first few years, I was there at the driving range, sometimes with my three sons, trying to figure out how something like hitting a little white ball can look so easy and yet be perhaps the hardest thing to actually accomplish. Well, hit it straight anyway.

My early recollection of the Fitzsimons golf course was actually when I was probably around 6 or so. My father worked at

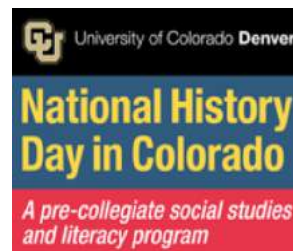
Fitzsimons but as a civilian employee. Civilian employees and their families had very little access to the military facilities. The movie theater, the swimming pool, the commissary and the golf course, for example, were only available for military personal. Imagine my joy when our next-door neighbor, Ellie (who was military), asked me if I'd like to go play golf with her. I was thrilled. Now imagine the heartbreak when we got to the course to be informed by the Pro Shop that I was too young and couldn't play.



Fitzsimons golf course will close permanently on December 17 and will be redeveloped. I managed to get one last round of golf in on November 21. Adious, old friend. You'll be a part of me forever.

Time waits for no man and our history eventually becomes shared memories of people and places. Preservation can help keep those memories a little more tangible so that we can share with future generations.





Volunteers are needed for **The Aurora History Day Contest**. Students are currently working on their research projects to prepare for **March 17th**.

There are some new schools competing this year so over 40 volunteers are needed for the upcoming contest.

The 2018 Theme is Conflict and Compromise in History.

The Aurora Regional Contest is March 17, 2018. To find out more, or to register to volunteer, visit the Aurora History Day website,

<http://auroranhdc.weebly.com/judges--volunteers.html>

You can sign up to judge or sign up to be an event volunteer.

For questions contact Jessica Lira|Education Curator | Aurora History Museum|City of Aurora | Department of Library and Cultural Services|15051 E. Alameda Pkwy Aurora, CO80012| office 303.739.6663 | jlira@auroragov.org

Mary Elitch Speaker Bio



Teri Johnson has a passion for history that was cultivated from a young age. Her grandfather would tell her stories of traveling from eastern Colorado to the front range in a covered wagon when she was only five years old. Teri became a teacher and taught 3rd grade for many years. After her teaching career, she began a second career in museum work,

starting two museums and curating at a third. For the last 32 years, Teri has also taught a prairie school every summer in Loveland, Colorado.

Reenacting historical Colorado characters has been a hobby of Teri's for many years. Along with Mary Elitch, she also enjoys portraying one of the first female pastors in Colorado as well as a local prairie teacher.



Spotlight on the Mayors of Aurora

Did you know that the Town of Fletcher/City of Aurora have had 42 Mayors since its beginnings back in 1891? With each issue of the *Advocate Newsletter* we'll take a quick look at each of them. Special thanks to Carolyn Brassell for her research and assistance.

MAYOR #7

Harry S. Class

- Served from 1903 – 1904
- Born August 4, 1873 in Atchinson, Kansas
- Came to Colorado in 1894
- Married Sadie B. Gushard in 1898 and they had 5 children
- County Clerk & Recorder for Adams County from 1907 – 1911
- He was an Adams County judge from 1907 to 1911
- Admitted to the Colorado Bar in 1911
- He was a District judge of the 1st District from 1913 - 1919
- He was a member of the Denver Athletic Club, Masonic Order and the Elks
- He would have been 30 years old when he became Mayor
- Colorado Governor at the time he was Mayor was James Hamilton Peabody
- He died in February 1948 at the age of 74
- He is buried in Fairmount Cemetery
- While he was in office:
 - The Town of Fletcher was incorporated
 - Fletcher struggling with how to repay the bonds sold in 1891 used to buy East Denver Water Company
 - Several lawsuits linger from bondholders over inability to pay interest on water bonds
 - The town board hired an attorney to represent the community
 - Aurora still buying water from the Denver Union Water Company

Another Milestone: Gully Homestead House Will be Restored

Reprinted from September 1982 Advocate

Since Hilbert Meyer suggested the formation of an Aurora Historical Commission in 1970, Aurora has begun to be more conscious that it has a history, an identity quite separate from Denver.

Milestones since then included:

- 1975 - Organization of the Aurora Historical Society
- 1977 - City gives the Tri-County Health Building at 1633 Florence Street for the Aurora History Center and Museum.

- 1978 - City budgets \$5,000 for buying office equipment for the center.
- 1979 – Museum coordinator Virginia Steele, a professional in the museum field, is hired.
- 1982 – City passes budget giving the necessary \$86, 140. From the Capital Improvements Fund in 1983 to restore Gully Homestead house.

The Aurora Historical Society included a special thank you in the article for those responsible.

The Aurora Historical Society wishes to thank members of the City Council --- Mayor Dennis Champine, Mayor Pro Tem Paul Tauer, Steve Bobrick, Linda Capra, A. J. Cordova, Jack Everhart, Jack Fenton, Steve Hogan and Frank Weddig --- for recognizing the citizens of Aurora who wish to preserve a part of their agricultural heritage for the years to come. Children and adults, alike, will some- day say, “Our city had the foresight to save the Gully Homestead house so that we can see what it was like to farm in the 1870’s,” Florence Staadt, president.

Susan Swiatosz, intern in preservation program at Columbia University, spent the summer at the Aurora History Center studying the Gully family and property and developing an interpretive plan for use following restoration. The following information is essentially from her report. (summer of 1982)



South elevation from architect's drawing as it will look when restored.

Family History

To refresh the memories of Historical Society members, John Gully was born in Tipperary, Ireland on June 24, 1850, and came to the United States with his parents, Thomas and Temperance Gully sometime between 1862 and 1870. Stone's History of Colorado gives the date as 1862.

At the age of 21, he procured 160 acres on Tollgate Creek near what is now Mississippi Avenue and Chambers Road. There a one-room wood building was erected or brought to the site. Homestead papers were taken out in 1871.

Later, perhaps in the mid-1870's, a one and one-half story addition was attached to the original one-room house. While it is said that Gully built this structure, Ruth Bottoms says that her father, George Adam, told her that his father, Archibald Adam, using a team of horses, helped Gully to move the addition from further east. Architects say that both parts of the house were built around the same time.

In 1892, Gully married Elizabeth Clifford and had five children: Mary Francis, James Edward, John Thomas, William Anthony, and Elizabeth Alphonse.

In addition to farming, he raised prize horses for delivery wagons. They were much in demand by such places as the Denver Dry Goods a Denver Department store. According to Stone's History of Colorado, Gully eventually owned 1,120 acres of land or nearly two sections on which he raised wheat and cattle.

Gully died in 1914 at the age of 64; his wife, in 1927. Both are buried at Fairmount Cemetery.

For about 30 years, between 1920 and 1950, their children raised cattle and held rodeos.

Architecture

The house represents the homestead architecture— afunctional house without ornamentation. The center door with windows on both sides is a common type. The front porch which was extended across the entire front of the house had wood columns with detailed caps and bases. Drip molds were placed over the front door and the windows.

The house was of clapboard on the front and of board and batten on the sides and around the kitchen. It was originally painted white. The brick chimneys were natural color.

It was first offered to the city by the family in 1976. The developer of the property, Medema Homes, wished to give it to the city in 1978 because it was in the center of a proposed runoff canal. After acceptance, Medema Homes moved it to its present site, Heritage Park. After proper stabilization, it will probably be moved again to its permanent site.

(John O'Brien, the grandson of the Gully's, his mother was Mary Frances Gully, and his wife Margaret, who lived at 2217 Hanover Street in original Aurora, and who were members of the Historical Society helped in the drive to preserve the house).

Why has it been so important to have this building, which has been deteriorating so rapidly, restored? It is the oldest known surviving structure in Aurora. It will serve as the center for cultural interpretation programs and exhibitions for Gully artifacts given to the city by the family. It will become another focal point where Aurorans may SEE their history.



Gully House 1900's

The Gully house was moved to what is now the DeLaney Farm Historic District in 1978. It was landmarked by the city of Aurora and was registered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. DeLaney Farm was designated as a historic district in 1997.



Gully house today

The DeLaney Farm Historic District has 158 acres of open space and restored farm buildings that date from 1866 to 1945. There are many programs and open days each year at the DeLaney Farm Historic District implemented by the Aurora History Museum.

A Little History. The Denver Department Store was mentioned in the Gully article. For those who don't remember the store here is a little background.

the Denver

The Denver Dry Goods Company, also known as "The Denver", was established in Denver, Colorado in 1879

by Michael. J. McNamara and L.H. Flanders as M.J. McNamara & Company and later The McNamara Dry Goods Company. In 1894, the company was reorganized under the name, "Denver Dry Goods Company". For a while it was claimed to be the largest department store west of Chicago. A description on one postcard from 1916 read: "The Largest Store in the Central West, 400 Feet long-Seven Acres Floor Area, 1,200 Employees, A \$2,500,000 Stock, 15th to 16th on California Street Denver Colorado".

Many Colorado residents fondly recall the stores' motto, "Where Colorado Shops With Confidence."

The store was acquired by May Company as part of Associated Dry Goods Corp. in 1986 (which had acquired it in 1966), 9 of the 12 locations were shut down and sold off and the remaining 3 units were converted to May-Daniels & Fisher stores in 1987. The original downtown store was built in 1889 and was expanded in 1898, 1906 and 1924. It was converted to apartments in 1994.

Fate Merged with [May D&F](#)

[May D&F](#) (1987-1993)

Successor

[Foley's](#) (1993-2006)

[Macys](#) (2006-present)

The Denver was one of the anchor store at the Aurora Mall when it was built in 1975. I used to buy their brass Christmas ornaments every year for my mother. I still have the set.

Aurora History Museum Exhibits & Events

Winter 2018

PROGRAMS

Polynesian Arts and Culture Days

Jan 20, Feb 17

11:30am-3:30pm

Drop in activities include hula dancing, talk story & ukulele lessons.

Historic Sites

Stanley Marketplace History Tours

Don't miss your opportunity to learn the unique & eccentric stories hidden in this community-focused marketplace & historic landmark. Dates, Themes, & times vary.

BROWN BAG LECTURE SERIES

**Wednesday Noon – 1:00 \$4 (\$3 resident) Aurora
Historical Society members: Free Bring your lunch**

Gosham Carmel

Jan 17

Freelance photographer & filmmaker Goshen Carmel discusses his work & participation with *Picture Me Here*, a storytelling program for refugees, immigrants & others who have been displaced.

460th Space Wing

Feb 21

A speaker from Buckley Air Force Base talks about the mission of the 460th Space Wing & how this unit protects America & its allies with satellite-based infrared sensors.

EXHIBITS

Wings to Satellites: A History of Buckley Air Force Base

Opens November 21 – June 3

From its early days as a technical training school and bombing range for Lowry Field, to its current role in providing the nation with strategic missile warning defense, Buckley has been a ubiquitous feature of Aurora for nearly 80 years.

US Route 40 & the American Road Trip

Dec 12- Mar 4

Grab a bite to eat, fill up the tank & take a trip through the history of the motels, restaurants & gas stations that lined Colfax Avenue since the rise of the automobile & the American road trip.

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