

# The Advocate Newsletter

Volume 40; Number 6; November 2016

## Aurora Historical Society

Aurora, Colorado



### Embrace your city, your past

#### President's letter November 2016

We had a great group tour the Rocky Mountain Arsenal in September on the comfort of our tour bus, thank you to all who came. I know some of you got some great pictures of the wild life roaming the plains. What a reclaimed treasure. Many thanks again to Terry Wright, our tour guide.

On November 29, we will meet at 7:00 pm at the Aurora History Museum for an outstanding program on Fort Logan National Cemetery, presented by James O'Neal Hughes. An incredible amount of history lies buried there. We will take a hiatus from meetings in December and resume in January with Leigh Jeremias who will speak on the Colorado Historic Newspaper Collection, an incredible wealth of Colorado History – not to be missed. As this is our annual meeting we will also vote on by-law changes proposed to the Society. Thank you Dexter and Julie Harding for researching the changes. *See you then.*

Very best wishes for a very Happy Thanksgiving to you all.

Sandy Sweeney, President Aurora Historical Society

#### 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:** Nadine Caldwell

**Historian:** Michael Lockwood

**Newsletter, Website, & Publicity:**

Lynne Evans 303-671-0874

**Program Committee:** Dolly Gray, Lynne Evans, Sandy Sweeney, Caroline Brassell

**Education:** Vacant

**If anyone is interested, please contact Sandy Sweeney @ 303-854-4249 or [Livelyline@aol.com](mailto:Livelyline@aol.com)**

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**Next Meeting November 29<sup>th</sup> at the Aurora History Museum at 7:00 PM for a program on Fort Logan National Cemetery presented by James O'Neal**



**January 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Pot Luck Dinner/meeting at 7:00PM Program Colorado Historic Newspaper Collection presented by Leigh Jeremias**





IT'S TIME TO PAY YOUR 2016 MEMBERSHIP DUES

On January 1, 2016 it is time to send your dues payments for year 2016 to Larry Wilterdink at 15163 E. Bethany Place, Aurora, CO 80014-3804. 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

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.

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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](http://www.auroracohistoricalsociety.org)

REMEMBERING: My First Set of Wheels

Every teenager can hardly wait for that time when they are old enough to drive and even more for when they get their very own car. At age 15 my grandmother, Mary Edwards, passed away and her 1956 Chevy Bel Air car became the possession of my parents.<sup>2</sup>

Fortune smiled on me and instead of it being sold, my parents decided to let me have the car, even though I was still 9 months away from getting my driver's license. For the 9 months leading up to that glorious day, I would go out and sit in the car and imagine driving it around Aurora, driving to school and being free to go wherever the urge took me. Never mind that I didn't have a job that would pay for gas money. I cleaned that car and polished it and dreamed of all the improvements I would make.

A little bit about the car, it didn't have power brakes. It didn't have power steering. It didn't have power windows. It DID have an AM radio. Stopping took lots of leg strength and turning the steering wheel to go around the corner, well you started cranking that wheel long before you got to the turn. The color was a mint green and white, identical to the one in the picture.



One day, as I was driving to Aurora Central for morning classes, I was stopped on 11<sup>th</sup>, blinker on waiting to make a left turn into the parking lot. All of sudden there was a loud noise and there I was, about 30 yards PAST the turn in. A little Honda economy car had rear ended me. To no one's surprise who knows how cars were built in the 50's versus those built in the late 60's, my solid Bel Air barely had a scratch on the bumper while the Honda, made of much more lightweight materials, was a crumpled heap of junk. Today I drive a Mazda 6 but boy, at times, I do miss that Chevy.

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

On September 18<sup>th</sup> AHS members took a tour of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal. If you could not attend I hope you have a chance to take the tour at some future date. The tour given by Terry Wright was very informative and it was quite amazing to see how the arsenal developed over time to what it is today. Here are a few Pictures.





*This article appeared in an old edition AHS Advocate. We have found many of these articles interesting and worth another look. So we will be reprinting some in this and future newsletters.*

### **“Report on Aurora Burial Site is Finalized- Carbon Dating Places Age of Indian Remains as 670 A. D.**

*First Printed in November 1982 by Gladys Metcalf with help from Mrs. Steele*

On Saturday, April 3, 1982, Lancer and Rory Cookie, ages 11 and 10, of Aurora found the lower jaw of a man buried in the bank along Tollgate Creek in Horseshoe Park. The boys took the jawbone home to their father, who reported the finding to Aurora Police the next day. After consultation with police, the county coroner, and a representative of the State Archaeologist's office, it was determined that there was a burial site, probably of an ancient Native American.

The Aurora History Center, the city's local history museum, then became responsible for the site, since it was located on city land and the museum has jurisdiction over archaeological and historical sites within Aurora. City Manager Robert E. Broom authorized an emergency appropriation of \$2,000 to cover excavation costs of the burial to prevent loss of remains into the creek from the eroding banks.

Museum Coordinator Virginia Steel, project director for the site, contracted with Mark Guthrie of the University of Denver's Archaeological Research Institute to supervise the work with Hames Hummert of the University of Colorado, a physical anthropologist, to remove the skeletal remains. Graduate students from the University of Denver formed the crew. The team started work on Wednesday, April 7, 1982 and completed removal of the burial on Monday, April 12, 1982.

Mayor Dennis Champine and the Aurora City Council then awarded \$2,435 to the History Center for analysis and a research report on the findings. The Colorado Historical Society's Local Assistance Program granted \$600 for radiocarbon-14 dating. Additional funds from the History Center's operating budget and in-kind support from city agencies of staff and equipment paid for costs of the project. Further contributions from volunteers from cultural resource contractors and private corporations were instrumental in completing the excavation.

#### **Site Findings**

The burial pit, perched on the banks of Tollgate Creek, contained the skeletal remains of an adult male, aged 35-39 years and a child 5-6 years. The purpose in removing the burials from their original site was to protect human remains, a valuable cultural resource, from the twin dangers of erosion and vandalism, since the site had been so widely reported.

Principal Investigator Guthrie summarizes the importance of the site in his report: "The paper discusses how information on isolated burials, such as the Aurora Burial, are many times reported to archaeologists by the public and yet little is done for the public in return. The obligation to reciprocate is, and should, be an important aspect of 'Public Archaeology.'"

The site would have been destroyed by nature or

Vandals had not the two boys reported it, and the neighborhood watch and the city taken sufficient interest in protecting local cultural resources to permit the excavation and study. The assistance provided by neighbors Bob and Han Peck and their family and Mike and Jean Denton and the Tollgate Homeowners Association cannot be overestimated or sufficiently thanked. Native American advisers volunteered technical assistance and counseled the project team on religious customs and procedures.

The professional report, a layman's version of the report to be written and slide/lecture programs for the community are the Museum's and the archaeologists' way of sharing the information gleaned.

Radiocarbon-14 dating of bone and carbon place the age of the burial about 670 A.D. Besides the partial skeletal remains of the child and the nearly complete remains of the adult (neither skull was in place, having previously eroded into the creek), two stone artifacts were found, as well as flakes from producing stone tools. An atlatl weight of shaped and polished gneiss, broken into two sections, lay along the upper vertebral column and near the pelvis. An amazonite polished stone, probably worn as a pendant, also with a broken edge, was located near the breastbone. The date of the site indicates that the Indians buried there belonged to the Plains-Woodland culture group.



Tollgate Burial Site/ Pictures Aurora History Museum





### Significance Stated

The significance of the project has five major characteristics.

- 1 The site is a prime example of public archaeology—community residents, local government, Native American advisers, professional scientists and historians all working to preserve a prehistoric cultural resource.
- 2 The site is one of only eight known Plains-Woodland burials in Colorado.
- 3 The burial pit is the deepest of the known Colorado Plains-Woodland burials at 145 centimeters, or about 4 ½ feet.
- 4 The scattering of the child's bones presented interpretation problems for the archaeologists, suggesting two hypotheses:
  - A. The juvenile represents a secondary bundle burial and the bones were scattered as a result of rodent activity.
  - B. The was buried first, and later disturbed by internment of the adult, thus causing the scattering of the bones.
- 5 The broken atlatl weight may represent a personal item which was ceremonially broken prior to internment, as seen in other burials. If this is the case, this may suggest a possible status burial of the adult.

No further excavations of the site were planned, since no physical evidence pointed to further burials. The adult and child were reburied together according to Native American religious customs.



**Aurora History Museum Programs  
Fall 2016**

**Exhibits**

**Gateway to the Rockies Art Show**

Sept. 20-Nov. 5

View a juried exhibit of paintings, photography and miniatures. Co-sponsored by the Aurora Artists Guild. Artwork is for sale.

**Wine & Cheese Reception**

Fri., September 30, 5-7:30pm

**17<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival of the Wreaths**

November 8-December 11

Get in the holiday spirit with this colorful and decorative display. Local businesses, organizations, and individuals decorate and donate the wreaths for you to bid on.

Proceeds go to the Aurora Museum Foundation.

To sponsor a wreath, call 303-739-6660.

**Events**

**125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary GeoCache!**

**Collect'em All**

Twelve geocaches are hidden throughout Aurora. Find all 12 and win a special 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary coin. The caches expire December 31. For details visit [Auroragov.org/aurora125](http://Auroragov.org/aurora125).

**Upcoming Programs**

**Ukulele Lessons & Talk Story Presentations**

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month: November 19 1-3 pm

Explore Hawaiian culture and history through music.

**November 19th: Parol Lantern Making Workshop**

9:00am – 12:00pm.

**Lunch Lecture Series**

**Brown Bag & White Linen Lecture Series**

Sponsored by the Aurora Historical Society

Wednesdays \* 12-1pm

\$4 (\$3 Residents)

Free for Aurora Historical Society Members.

Bring your lunch.

**Denver's Transit System History**

November 16

Kevin Snow, author of the book, "Riding Denver's Rails: A Mile-High Streetcar History," shares the history of Denver's public transportation system.

**Aurora's Historic Newspaper**

**Digitization Project**

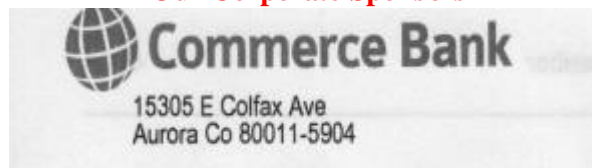
The first 9 reels are now online check it out at

<https://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org/>

Please keep supporting this project until we have all the Aurora papers digitized.

The Aurora History Museum has added a link to their website to link to Colorado Historic Newspapers. Check it out!

**Aurora's  
Our Corporate Sponsors**



1301 S. Havana Street Aurora, CO

<http://www.suss.net/showroom/buick>



**Wagner Equipment**

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If anyone would like to receive the newsletter by email and let the Aurora Historical Society save the postage, Please contact Lynne Evans at 303-671-0874 or [lyevans@comcast.net](mailto:lyevans@comcast.net)

Also-If you have questions, comments, or suggestions about the newsletter you can contact me as well.

Please check out the AHS Website:

<http://aurorahistoricalociety.org>

**We need your help!** **\$1/page!**

For just \$1/page you can help digitize Aurora's historic newspapers and ensure history doesn't get lost just because microfilm is hard to use!

Newspapers like the Aurora Democrat are saved on microfilm reels. Digitizing this film creates an online and searchable database to look for photos, articles, or anything else you might find interesting!

Sponsored by the Aurora Historical Society & the Aurora History Museum Archives

View the first pages online Spring 2016!

Help Aurora participate in the Colorado Historic Newspapers Collection. For more information please visit [www.aurorahistoricalociety.org](http://www.aurorahistoricalociety.org)

**Historic Aurora Newspapers - Digitization Project**

Yes! I want to give my support with my tax-deductible gift.  
\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_ other

Please make checks payable to: Aurora Historical Society

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