

The Advocate Newsletter

Volume 42; Number 8; March 2018

Aurora Historical Society

Aurora, Colorado



Embrace your city, your past

March President's Letter

Thank you to all who came for the Annual Potluck Dinner, it really was a treat with our featured speaker Teri Johnson who portrayed Mary Elitch. A very interesting woman in Colorado's history.

The potluck was wonderful, we have some of the best cooks around – thank you all so much. Many thanks to Nadine and Dolly for getting the ham and chicken, and Carolyn who was unable to be with us as her husband John just had major surgery, please keep them in your thoughts and prayers. I have to tell you this is one of the very best boards ever to work with,

This past year we have had some changes to our venues and more planned for the future. And don't forget, we are always open to hearing about something new you think would be of interest to our group. We are planning some equally informative programs this year and hope to see you all there.

The Fairmount Heritage Foundation has donated some of their guide/history books to the Society, I will have them for distribution at the next meeting. One of the tours we will be doing this summer is at Riverside, followed by our annual picnic, this will give you a chance to be very knowledgeable about early Denver history ahead of time. The next time any of you run into Gary O'Hara please be sure and thank him – I was thrilled with their generosity.

Sandy Sweeney, President

Historical Society Officers

President: Sandy Sweeney (303-854-4249)

Vice President: Nadine Caldwell

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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



Not to be missed upcoming program, “*The Seamy Side of Early Denver City*” by Jack Stone, March 27 at the Aurora History Museum.

Come at 6:30 for light refreshments, program starts at 7:00 p.m. Jack Stone is an Author “Shinin” Times, Actor and Western Historian and he will present in Costume.

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

You can now pay your dues online at the AHS website on the join today page using PayPal if you would like or you can mail them in.

<http://auroracohistoricalsociety.org/join-today/>

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

First off, the house pictured ISN'T my old home, but it is just a few houses down from it and the style is exactly the same. Our house didn't have a garage or a covered front porch but otherwise this is what it looked like.



I talk about what it was like to live in Aurora in the 60's and 70's but I haven't written about WHERE I lived growing up. The family home was located at 12705 E. 14th Avenue in the Jewell Heights neighborhood and was built in 1957. The house was at the corner of 14th Avenue and Scranton, one block south of Colfax. It was a corner lot and immediately to the north of our place was the Manor House Motel (yes the now infamous Motel where there was some creepy stuff going on). Fitzsimons Army Base was to the north and the main gate was just 3 blocks east of Scranton. Since my father worked at Fitzsimons as a Machinist Foreman it was a very convenient location. My uncle, Jack Edwards, bought the place before it was built.

I can recall the layout perfectly even though it's been 42 years since I was inside it. Coming through the front door you were immediately in the living room. Off to your left was a hallway that led to two bedrooms on your left (south side), straight ahead was a linen closet, off to the right was the slightly larger master bedroom and the bathroom. From the living room if you went straight ahead you'd find the dining room (that was about the size of a breakfast nook today) and then to the left of that was the kitchen (again small by today's standards). Nothing fancy.

That house, with its concrete front porch painted brick red to match the bottom row of red brick on the house was where I called home from the time I

was 2 until I moved out to seek my fame and fortune at the age of 20. 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.

Aurora's Historic Newspaper Digitization Project

The Aurora Historic Newspaper Digitization Project is going strong. You can now browse old Aurora Newspapers online. Here is a picture of the front page of the *Aurora Democrat* from March 2, 1910. At the Shelburn & Ruggles you can buy 6 loaves of bread for 25 cents. There is now a Pay Pal button on the Aurora Historical Society Website where you can donate to the project online. There is also a link to the newspapers on the links page on the AHS website and on the Aurora History Museum's website.

<http://aurorahistoricalociety.org/donate-to-the-newspaper-digitization-project/>

The button is on the bottom of the page.



citizens. The auxiliary association of citizens were taken into the Fire Department as honorary members and will hereafter have a vote in the proceedings. It was resolved to give a dance on March 16, to aid the fire department.

Every member of the department and of the Auxiliary Association said they would take five tickets. The subscriptions continue to pour in, the last total being \$65—don't forget to pay yours in at the bank—any sum is welcome.

Now about the tickets for the dance. Every family in Aurora should take one at least—it doesn't make any difference whether you intend to go or not—buy one! If you care about your home buy one; if you regard the safety of your family, buy one! Make that dance a grand success and remember Aurora shall have a fire department!



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 #8
Louis M. Strauss**

- Served from 1904 – 1905
- Born 1854 in Ohio
- Came to Colorado in 1904
- Married Mary Lukens on August 28, 1879 in Illinois and they had 5 children
- Attended Jefferson Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia
- Received his medical license in Colorado in 1904
- He would have been 50 years old when he became Mayor
- Colorado Governors at the time he was Mayor were James Hamilton Peabody and Alva Adams
- He died on June 30, 1906 at the age of 52
- He is buried in Fairmount Cemetery
- While he was in office:
 - June 23, 1904 Permission was granted to the Beth Madrash Hagodal Jewish Congregation to lay out, operate and maintain forever a cemetery within the corporate limits of Fletcher.

This article also appears on the front page of the March 2, 1910 *Aurora Democrat* "Protect Your Homes"

The firemen held their regular meeting Monday night, together with the various committees appointed by the

- Fletcher struggles with repaying bonds sold in 1891 used to buy East Denver Water Co.
- July 26, 1904 Aurora was mentioned in the Minutes for the first time. Alfred Corbbin wrote a letter to William Harris expressing interest in a property located about 4 miles east of Aurora known as the B.F. Simpson ranch, which formerly provided the towns of Aurora and Fletcher with their water supply
- September 7, 1904 Committee appointed to establish a system of house numbering

The Little Man with the Big Mustache

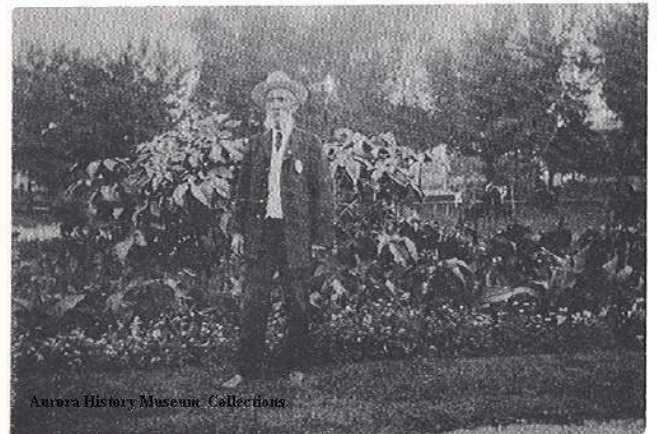
By Juanita Preston Sparks

Reprinted from May 30, 1989 Advocate

Photos Courtesy of the Aurora History Museum

Alfred Gaines Stitt, Marshall of the Town of Aurora, boy-soldier of the Civil War, and skilled cabinetmaker, became a legend in his own time.

Recent historians and many of Aurora's school children have known him as "Pop" Stitt. To his contemporaries, and those that knew him, he was called



Mr. Stitt, Marshall Stitt, or simply The Marshall. Affectionately he was known as "Dad" Stitt during the period following World War I, when he operated a passenger service to Fitzsimons. By this time he was a gray-haired man in his 70s, who was a surrogate father to many soldiers who were far from home.

He was born on Christmas Day, 1849, in Paris, Kentucky, the son of a physician. Soon after the end of the Civil War, he married, and he and his bride, Robina Elizabeth, tried raising cattle in Texas. When the enterprise failed, they continued westward. He tried blacksmithing in California and invested in an electric plant in Nevada—neither venture was successful.

The lure of gold brought the Stitts to Colorado—Aspen, Leadville, Cripple Creek, and Victor—but again, wealth eluded the couple. They had one daughter Mary Robert Boyd.

Mary, or sometimes, known as May Boyd, married young, and had a daughter, Elsie May. Elsie May, Elsie May was the pride and joy of A. G. Stitt's life. He did not believe that the young child was being properly cared for by her mother, so he kidnapped the little girl. A bitter custody battle followed, but eventually the Stitts won out, and they adopted their granddaughter. She took the family name, and was known as Elsie May Stitt.

It was in the early 1900s that the Stitts moved to Aurora. They owned a large portion of the block on Ease Colfax between Elmira and Emporia Street. The home was here, and on the front porch was their famous

Annual Pot Luck Meeting at the Aurora History Museum on January 30th, was a big success. The food was great, the company was wonderful, and I think everyone enjoyed our speaker, Teri Johnson who entertained us as Mary Elicht.



Thanks to all who came and brought wonderful dishes for our dinner.



parrot, who called out, "Hello or Hello Polly," to all who passed by.

Mrs. Pauline Lincoln, who was sometimes called Polly, liked to tell the following story. When she first came to Aurora as a bride, she was walking down Colfax one day when she heard a voice call out, "Hello, hello Polly!"

She was certain that no one in this town knew her by name, so she looked around and finally saw the parrot sitting in a cage on the front porch of the Stitt home.

From that day on, Mrs. Lincoln always



acknowledged the bird who first called her by her nickname when she came to this new place.

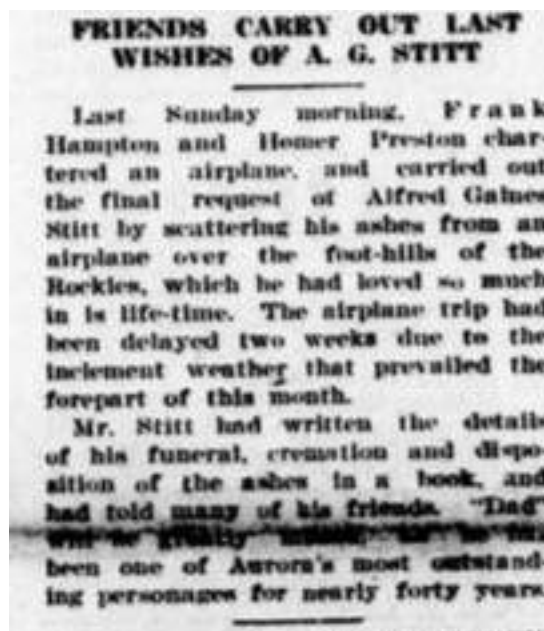
During the period after Aurora became a town, A. G. Stitt was the highest paid city employee. As Town Marshall he received a salary of \$70.00 per month.

In December of 1901, the following tribute appeared in the *Aurora Democrat*: "After the terrific storm, Marshall Stitt is to be commended because he was busy at sun-up and had a path through the snow on every street by 9:00 a.m.. He also constructed a skating rink for the young where all dangers are eliminated, and where the fun is just as great." The snow plowing feat was helped along by his horse, which pulled the plow to the accompaniment of ringing sleigh bells.

Another tribute to the wiry, little man with a large mustache was paid by the citizens of Aurora on August 27, 1910. "In appreciation of our services as an officer of the town, treating everyone with fairness and courtesy...we present you with this suit." The tribute was signed, "Your friends, Citizens of Aurora." He received at this time a beautiful, blue, broadcloth uniform.

On January 9, 1913, A. G. Stitt resigned as Town Marshall, but he continued to work for the city in other capacities. His last, and most successful business venture, was the Model-T Jitney line to Fitzsimons Hospital. The streetcar did not go east of Aurora as far as Fitzsimons. Following World War I, A. G. Stitt had a fleet of touring cars which carried passengers from Aurora to the hospital, or from the hospital back to the streetcar line. The cost was a Jitney, slang for 5 cents-hence, the name Jitney Line.

G. Stitt died in 1939 at the age of 90. Tales and legends of this man flourished for many years. His ashes were scattered from an airplane over the Hogback west of Denver, at his request, by two of his best friends, pool hall operator, Frank Hampton and Adams County Judge, Homer G. Preston.



Aurora History Museum Exhibits & Events

Spring 2018

PROGRAMS

Polynesian Arts and Culture Days

March 17

11:30am-3:30pm

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

Historic Sites

Stanley Marketplace Capsule Packs

Saturdays and Sundays 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm

New for 2018, learn some of the history at Stanley Marketplace through five activities designed to reveal the layout of the company and a little bit about the people and projects associated with the original owner of the building, Stanley Aviation. The Packs are designed for ages 8 and up and children under age 13 should complete the activities with an adult.

BROWN BAG LECTURE SERIES

Wednesday Noon – 1:00 \$4 (\$3 resident) Aurora

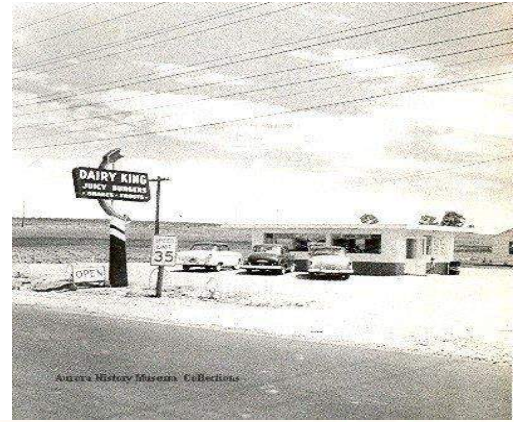
Historical Society members: Free Bring your lunch

March 21st Noon

The Golden Age of Colfax Avenue

Local musician and curator of ColfaxAvenue.com, Jonny Barber will be here to entertain visitors with a discussion about the history of Colfax and the community it helps anchor.

Pictures from Colfax Avenue



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- May 6

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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Teamwork • Excellence • Accountability • Safety • Integrity • Communication



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