

# The Advocate Newsletter

Volume 43; Number 6; November 2019

## Aurora Historical Society

Aurora, Colorado



### Embrace your city, your past

#### President's Letter November 2019

Dear Aurora Historical Society Members,

I hope you have all recovered from the last snowstorm. It may be an interesting winter.

The Four-Mile House Tour in September was a big success. Everyone seemed to have a great time. Thanks to Susan Hicks for being in charge and taking lots of pictures of this fun day.

On November 26<sup>th</sup>, I hope you will all join us at the Aurora History Museum to hear Dr. Gordon Tucker talk about archeology in Aurora. I am sure you will learn a lot of information about the history of our area that you never knew before.

Make sure you also mark your calendars for our Annual Potluck Dinner on January 28, 2020 at the Aurora History Museum. Our speaker will be Dr. Rena Fowler to present a program about women homesteaders in eastern Colorado. It is sure to be a great meal and a great program.

I hope you all have a wonderful Thanksgiving, and I am looking forward to an exciting 2020.

*Lynne Evans, President*

#### Historical Society Officers

**President, Newsletter, & Website:** Lynne Evans  
303-671-0874 [lyevans@comcast.net](mailto:lyevans@comcast.net)

**Vice President:** Nadine Caldwell

**Secretary:** Dolly Gray

**Treasurer:** Michael Lockwood

**Directors:** Carolyn Brassell, Susan Hicks, & Sandy Sweeney, & Karen Schweider

**Membership:** Larry Wilterdink

**Hospitality:** Carolyn Brassell

**Historian:** Michael Lockwood

**Program Committee:** Dolly Gray, Susan Hicks, & Carolyn Brassell

**Education-** Vacant

**If anyone is interested, please contact Lynne Evans  
303-671-0874 [lyevans@comcast.net](mailto:lyevans@comcast.net)**

**UPCOMING  
events**

**Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> AHS meeting /Speaker Dr. Gordon Tucker/ archeology in Aurora**

**January 28, 2020 Annual Pot Luck Dinner/Speaker Dr. Rena Fowler/ women homesteaders in eastern Colorado**

**March 2, 2020 AHS meeting/ Beth Nobles – Sand Creek Trail**

**May TBA Melvin School house tour  
Stay tuned for more information- Hope you can join us!!**



### IT'S TIME TO PAY YOUR 2020 MEMBERSHIP DUES

It is time to send your dues payments for year 2020 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/>



#### 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: Gateway To The Rockies Parade

Ah, the Aurora Gateway To The Rockies Parade. Back in a time when Aurora was still a pretty small city and in



felt like you were back in Mayberry with Sheriff Andy Taylor, Aunt Bee and Opie. The parade would pass under the namesake sign and the streets would be lined with people. I remember sitting on the curb and waiting for one of the floats to go by where they'd throw some candy at the spectators. Gotta love a Jolly Rancher you pick up off the street. Marching bands from the High Schools and floats pulled by cars or tractors with business advertising their wares. I miss those days.

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.



#### Spotlight on the Mayors of Aurora

Did you know that the Town of Fletcher/City of Aurora have had 44 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 #18**  
**John McMillan**

- Served from 1918 – 1919
- He was born 17 April 1877 in Plymouth Township, Russell County, Kansas
- Married Emma Roseburg Banks in 1906 in Topeka, Kansas
- They had no children
- He was a stenographer for the railroad
- He was a Private in the Spanish American War
- He was a Mason and a member of the Colorado Conservatory Valley of Denver
- He had a new house built at 1629 Galena Street in 1912 (that I own and currently live there)
- He owned Aurora Realty until about 1951
- He would have been 41 years old when he became Mayor
- He died 27 October 1973 at the age of 96 in Kansas
- Colorado Governors at the time he was Mayor were Julius Gunter & Oliver Shoup
- While he was in office:
  - U.S. Army Hospital No. 21 was named Fitzsimons

Trivia Question Answers:

1) b 2) c 3) b 4) b 5) c

# TRIVIA

C H A L L E N G E

City of Aurora Trivia Questions

1. When did Colfax Avenue become Highway 40?
  - a. 1923
  - b. 1926
  - c. 1929



How times have changed

2. Who was Aurora's first City Manager
  - a. Dan Oates
  - b. Ray Sallies
  - c. Earl Sandquist



3. Where was the Aurora History Center originally located?
  - a. 9898 E. Colfax Avenue
  - b. 1633 Florence Street
  - c. 15051 E. Alameda Parkway



4. Why were Vicki Lorato, Pam Whitman and Eileen Elhard rejected from the Aurora Police Academy in 1974?
  - a. Women weren't allowed to become police officers
  - b. They failed the physical test
  - c. They were rejected after interviews with the department



5. What was the original purpose for the establishment of the Historical Commission in 1970?
  - a. Enforce provisions of Chapter 8, Article XXII in the Aurora code
  - b. Promote Aurora's historical resources
  - c. Establish a museum



**Four Mile House Historic Park Tour** by Susan Hicks



that make up the Four Mile House Historic park. Our starting point was the Grant Family Education center, a spacious and light filled structure with craft items, books, and local honey for sale as well as a generous conference center.

Fifteen Aurora Historical Society members, friends, and grandkids took a walk on the quiet side on 21 Sept. 2019 with a tour of an award-winning living history museum. Lead by our guide, Cindy, in period costume, we strolled through the 16 acres

Walking out of the modern building into the bright



sunshine of a late summer Colorado day was indeed stepping back in time. Traffic sounds faded away. Replaced by the rustling of the cottonwoods and the

crunch of gravel along the path thru the park. Cindy tells us some of the history of the park.

Four Mile House is the oldest standing structure in Denver. It began as a log cabin in 1859 perched beside the Cherokee Trail. Mary Cawker purchased the home in 1860 and welcomed stage travelers stopping along the



Trail to Denver. Levi and Millie Booth purchased the property in 1864. They grew the holding into a 600-acre farm and passed it to their descendants in the early 1900's. In 1975 the land and house were

acquired by Denver Parks and Recreation and restoration efforts began.

As we enter the Four Mile House, Cindy gathers us in the oldest part.

The log cabin rooms are intimate, with barely enough space to contain all 15 of us. The room with the bar was used by the male travelers. The room with the small day bed was for the ladies.



As we move to the newer parts of the home, built to accommodate the Booth's growing family, the style changes to Victorian. Rooms are still small, but ceilings are high, and the lace curtains admit filtered light. One of our young tour

participants asked why the floorboards squeak. “Because they are old” is the reply. I was thinking the same thing about my knees and we walked up and down winding stairs.



Outbuildings have been restored or re-created. The barn, blacksmith shop, trapper’s cabin, chicken coop, and bee house were included in our tour. We met Perl and her two goat companions

who give wool for spinning and munch on, well, just about anything. Moose, the large Percheron draft horse, and Jake, the carriage horse, enjoy the admiration of visitors and remind us of days when horses plowed the fields, pulled the wagons, and provided the muscle to transport our ancestors across the prairie to Denver.



We continued our stroll through the grounds. The youngsters marveled at the chickens, goats, and horses. Time seemed to slow. The picnic benches beckoned, and Cherry Creek flowed gently on its winding path.

The story of Four Mile House is one of

transformation. What started as a small cabin became a welcoming center of the community and then a farm providing an important source of vegetables, milk, and eggs for Denver. Today, the property educates us about our history. [More pictures can be seen on the website: http://auroracohistoricalsociety.org/](http://auroracohistoricalsociety.org/) Thanks to Susan Hicks for the pictures.

Consider becoming a member and/or a volunteer. For more information to plan your visit check out [www.fourmilepark.org](http://www.fourmilepark.org).

*Reprinted from the November 28, 1995 Vol 20 No 4 Fitzsimons Facts by Juanita Preston Sparks*

**Just a few facts about · Fitzsimons Army Medical Center.**

**Prisoner-of War Camp** A complete theater-of-operations prisoner-of-war internment camp was built at Fitzsimons at the beginning of World War II. The Geneva Convention required that medical care for prisoners had to equal to that of American troops. There were 32 structures that housed relatively content Italian and German POWs.

**The Red Cross Building** For many years the paved road from the west gate ended at the Red Cross Building. The



building, built in the shape of a cross, was constructed in 1918. The Red Cross Building had a lending library, a stage, and a motion picture booth.

**Golf Course** The golf course began as a nine-hole course and by modern standards was rather primitive. It was necessary, early on, to have oiled sand greens to discourage the native vegetation of cactus and yucca. The southern half of the present golf course is the original course. The course was expanded to 18 holes in 1942.

**The Interior Lobby** The interior lobby of the main hospital building is finished in Colorado Yule,



Travertine, and Golden Nebo marble. There are also massive white marble columns, marble stairways, and marble flooring.

**The Chapel** The chapel was formally dedicated in



December of 1942. It is an all-faith chapel and has special features to accommodate wheelchair patients.

**Women's Army Corps** In 1944 a group of enlisted personnel known as the WACS or Women's Army Corps

arrived at Fitzsimons. Women enlisted in the WACS were granted full military status.

**Charles Kelly Boulevard** Charles Kelly Boulevard replaced the former Bruns A venue, which runs from west to east in front of the main hospital. It was named for Charles L. Kelly, who was killed in action in Vietnam on July 1 ' 1964 ' while commanding an aeromedical evacuation of wounded soldiers near Vinh Long.

**The Duck Pond** The Duck Pond remaining from the days of the Gutheil Park Nursery. It is about one acre in size, but is considered to be a wild fowl preserve. It was



established in 1927, and after awhile migrating waterfowl found refuge among the trees. They came for food and

safety. Much of the waterfowl remain all year, but it is believed that migrating birds return year after year to this sanctuary.

**The Green House** The green house was originally established to provide a nurturing atmosphere for landscaping plants, as well as to provide plants for offices. In 1923, Lt. Col. Paul C. Hutton, who was a collector of tropical plants from all over the world, enlarged the green house. At one time during his tenure the green house had an avocado tree, banana tree, and citrus fruits. Now, the green house is manned chiefly by volunteers, but fresh flowers are in evidence throughout the hospital.

### Aurora History Museum Exhibits and Events Winter 2019

#### HISTORIC SITES

Story Line is now available online!  
Visit [AuroraGov.org/HistoricSites](http://AuroraGov.org/HistoricSites) to see which historic landmarks have a recorded story line.

**DeLaney Farm Open House 8- noon** Celebrate the holidays with a glimpse into Aurora's past. Enjoy games, history, and a hot chocolate bar with fix-ins donated by Savory Spice Shop.

Open Saturday Dec. 7 and Sunday Dec. 8

**Centennial House Open House December 14<sup>th</sup>, 9-1**  
Celebrate the holidays inside an 1891 Fletcher home. Enjoy a free, self-guided tour & cookies.

**Lunch & Learn Lecture Series**  
Wed., noon-12:45 p.m.  
\$4 (\$3 Resident)  
Aurora Historical Society members: Free  
Bring your lunch

**November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019 Noon** Award-winning local author Adrian Miller discusses the history of Thanksgiving with a focus the food, traditions and celebrations of the White House.

**December 18, 2019, Noon** Molly Brown House Museum will share the joys and traditions of a Victorian Christmas. Get into the holiday spirit at this festive program about kissing balls, Christmas trees, stockings hung with care, and Jingle Bells!

#### EXHIBITS

**Hometown Pride: Student Athletic and Extracurricular History in Aurora**  
April 23 – April 5, 2020

Whether an athlete or a mathlete, many students grow up involved in some sort of extracurricular activity. This exhibit explores the sports & activities that shaped Aurora's youth throughout the years. Relive your glory days & learn about Aurora's new generation of students as the museum celebrates Aurora's hometown pride.

**Festival of the Wreaths**  
Nov. 5 – Dec 6

The Aurora Museum Foundations' Annual "Festival of the Wreaths" raises funds to support exhibits & education programs. Visit [AuroraGov.org/WreathsFestival](http://AuroraGov.org/WreathsFestival) to sponsor a wreath.

**Aurora's Historic Growth**  
Dec 15 – May 31

From the humble roots of a farming community to the prominence of being the third largest city in the state, Aurora's population has boomed over the last century. In this exhibit, we take a deeper look at Aurora's growth and how it has impacted the economy, environment, and cultural landscape of our ever-changing community.

**Growing Home & Trolley Trailer no. 710**  
Growing Home is a permanent exhibit about Aurora's history featuring Trolley Trailer No. 610, a fully-restored 1913 historic trolley trailer. The exhibit highlights people, places, and events from Aurora's history. It features over 100 historic photographs and

objects, and the fully restored 1913 historic Trolley Trailer No. 610 in the new Ruth Fountain gallery. Go inside the trolley and experience 100 years of history first-hand. The exhibit was designed by Dennis Meyer of Filament Design/Build with support from museum staff.

In October 2012, the Aurora City Council approved funding for the construction of a new gallery and addition at the Aurora History Museum. Council resolved to name it in honor of Ruth Fountain, a former city councilwoman, community activist and museum supporter.



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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)

Please visit the Aurora Historical Society Website <http://auroracohistoricalociety.org/>

Got Questions?  
**Ask a Historian**  
 Aurora Historical Society  
 mdlkel@aol.com

**Member benefits**

FOX discount  
 We have a discount for 20% off of tickets for just this sort of thing. The discount code is CULTURAL. Anyone can use that for our Season shows online or over the phone (not valid for special event, cabaret's or rentals).

Remember AHS members also get in free to the "Lunchtime Lectures" at the Aurora History Museum.

**Vintage Ads from the Aurora Democrat June 3, 1955**

**THE AURORA DEMOCRAT**

Founded 1909 by R. N. Gwynn

**PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY**

Published by Aurora Publishing Comany



Publication Office 9736 East Colfax Telephone EM 6-1600  
 ARAPAHOE COUNTY, COLORADO

Entered as Second Class Matter at Denver, Colorado, Under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Subscription Price \$3.00 a Year. Single Copies 5 cents  
 Want Ads 10c per line per insertion. Display Ad Rates on Application

**Fox** Aurora Theatre  
 EM 6-2941  
 Weekly Program

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

THURS., FRI., SAT., June 2, 3, 4

Brad Crawford in  
 "BIG HOUSE, U. S. A."  
 Shows at 5:00 and 8:45  
 —PLUS—

Van Johnson in  
 "BATTLE GROUND"  
 Shows at 6:20 and 10:05  
 ADDED—CARTOON

SAT. KID SHOW 10 A.M.-4:45 P.M.  
 Two and one-half Hours Long. Last show at 2:00 o'clock.  
 'ADVENTURES OF ROBINHOOD'  
 3 Cartoons and Serial

SUN. - WED. June 5, 6, 7, 8  
 Jane Powell Tony Martin  
 and Ann Miller  
 "HIT THE DECK"  
 Sunday 1:00, 5:05, 9:15  
 Mon., Tues., Wed., 5:00-9:05  
 —PLUS—

William Holden and Mickey Rooney  
 —IN—  
 "BRIDGES AT TOKO-RI"  
 Sunday 2:50-7:00-11:05  
 Mon., Tues., Wed., 6:50-11:00  
 CARTOON AND NEWS

TUESDAY "TEEN-TIME"  
 Ages 19 Years and Under—10c  
 "BABE RUTH STORY"  
 Science-Sorts-Cartoon  
 Continuous 10:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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*Happy Thanksgiving!*