

The Advocate Newsletter

Vol. 50 No.5

September/October 2025

Aurora Historical Society

Aurora, Colorado



Embrace your city and its history

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

September/October 2025

Dear Aurora Historical Society Members,

I hope everyone has had a restful and productive summer. It was pretty hot (close to triple-digit temperatures) for a few weeks, but otherwise the weather has been pleasant. I had expected to be excavating at Tel Shimron in northern Israel this summer, but just a couple days before I was supposed to leave, Israel decided to attack Iran. As a result, the country closed down (no flights in or out) and our field season was cancelled. I was disappointed, but I was also glad that I wasn't somewhere where I might get smushed by a rocket or drone. Fortunately, my family found plenty of things for me to do this summer and I got a lot done.

On September 30, the Aurora Historical Society resumes its bi-monthly meetings, each of which includes an engaging speaker, which will continue through May. Published elsewhere in this newsletter is the schedule and descriptions of these programs. I look forward to seeing and talking with you at these meetings.

As mentioned in my previous message, we are hoping this season to accomplish several worthy goals, including increasing membership, scheduling engaging and enlightening meeting programs, planning tours of the many historical and

archaeological wonders of our city, and introducing and illuminating Aurora's history to all citizens. We will need your help to accomplish these goals. Please contact me at any time with your thoughts or questions.

See you in September.

Gordy Tucker

Historical Society Officers

President: **Dr. Gordon Tucker**

Vice President: **Keith Outcalt**

Co-Secretary **Lynne Evans & Susan Hicks**

Treasurer: **Gregg Chase**

Directors: **Nadine Caldwell, Susan Hicks, Judy Keilman**

Historical Society Committees

Education: **Keith Outcalt**

Historian: **Keith Outcalt**

Hospitality: **Judy Keilman**

Membership: **Gregg Chase**

Newsletter: **Michael Lockwood**

Program: **Susan Hicks**

Publicity: Vacant

Website: **Lynne Evans**

meet your OFFICERS



Dr. Gordon Tucker, President
Excavating at Tel Simron, Israel 2024



Keith Outcalt, Vice-President



Gregg Chase, Treasurer



Lynne Evans, Co-Secretary



Nadine Caldwell, Director



Susan Hicks, Co-Secretary

Photo Unavailable



Judy Keilman, Director

Join or Renew Membership

Our membership dues come due in January each year now so you can send your payment for year 2025 to Gregg Chase, 25762 East Kettle Circle, Aurora, CO 80016.

(Note: The society changed its bylaws at the March 2022 meeting. The membership categories have changed).

Memberships:

Individual	\$15	Contributing	\$30
Family	\$20	Life	\$200
Student	\$10	Business	\$200

If you wish to receive a hardcopy there is an additional \$5 charge

You can now pay your dues online at the AHS website on the join today page using PayPal.

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

**THANK YOU
NEW & RE-NEWING
MEMBERS**

July/August 2025

May – Keith Outcalt, Lynne Evans (LIFETIME)

June – Ruth Schmunk (LIFETIME)

July – Linda Pelton-Galligen

August – none



Got Questions?

**Ask a
Historian**

E-mail your question to koutcalt@gmail.com

Member Discounts

FOX discount

We have a discount for 20% off 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 events, cabarets, or rentals).

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



Aurora, Colorado Historic Landmarks

There are 34 Historic Landmarks in Aurora, Colorado. Each newsletter we'll show them to you one by one

Melvin Schoolhouse – Landmark #1 Article written by Keith Outcalt



- Melvin School in its original location, 1931
- 4950 S. Laredo Street (current location)
- Landmarked: 1984

MELVIN SCHOOLHOUSE IN ARAPAHOE COUNTY, COLORADO



The schoolhouse, shortly after it was moved to Smoky Hill High School, 1977. Photo: Alfred J. Crowle.

This wood frame, two-room schoolhouse was built in 1922 to serve the community of Melvin, located 12 miles southeast of Denver. When it was built, on land donated by a farmer, it replaced the one-room schoolhouse that served the small farming community.

The first year it operated twenty-six students from local families were taught by two teachers. Students from first to sixth grade were in one of the school's classrooms while older students, up to tenth grade, were in the second. The school also served as a community center for events and meetings.

The town of Melvin was founded in 1859, during the height of Colorado's gold rush. It was named for John G. Melvin of Connecticut, who settled on 320 acres along Cherry Creek in Arapahoe County. He and his wife enlarged their home and opened it to travelers in 1868. Their home became the Twelve Mile House, a stop along the Smoky Hill Trail, named for its distance from Denver. The community built its first school in 1874 and by 1922 a larger building was needed.

In 1933, the Castlewood Dam collapsed. This dam which was located south of Franktown controlled flooding along Cherry Creek. Following its collapse the Federal Government condemned portions of Melvin to build the Kenwood Dam. When it was apparent that the new dam would not be enough, more of the community was condemned for a new

project. Work began on the Cherry Creek Dam and Cherry Creek Reservoir in 1949 and the town of Melvin was abandoned.

With no community to serve, Melvin school was moved to the corner of Parker and Quincy where it remained for twenty-five years. It's belfry and school bell were removed. Between 1953 and 1970 the building acted as different kind of community hub, the Emerald Isle tavern. When the tavern closed the building was vacant. It was briefly occupied by Jaycees and a Cub Scout pack, but its condition deteriorated.



Schoolhouse interior, post-restoration, 1983. Photo: Alfred J. Crowle.

In December 1976, the school was moved again to its current home at 4950 S. Laredo St, between Laredo Middle School and Smoky Hill High School. This move was facilitated by the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society (CCVHS) which was incorporated to restore and preserve the schoolhouse. Six years of work, donated time, money and materials were needed to bring the schoolhouse back to its former glory. Much of the work was done by former students. The building was rededicated in 1982 as the Melvin Schoolhouse Museum-Library and is used by Cherry Creek School District in cooperation with CCVHS for local history education. In 1984 it was added to the National Register of Historic Places and named as the first landmark for the city of Aurora. Today, Melvin School serves as a connection to the area's rural past and a testament to the importance of historical societies.



**Aurora Historical Society 30 September meeting
Hammering Out Human Rights
6:00pm at the Aurora History Museum**

Our speaker for the evening is



Susan Marie Frontczak

Living History Portrayal of Eleanor Roosevelt at the September 30 meeting of the Aurora Historical Society.

Ms. Frontczak's topic for the evening is titled "Hammering Out Human Rights - Eleanor Roosevelt and the United Nations." According to the Storysmith website (Eleanor Roosevelt Living History by Storysmith), in this portrayal "Eleanor Roosevelt speaks of the ground-breaking, grueling, tempestuous, and eventually triumphant development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a Magna Carta for humankind. You may be surprised to find out how important Human Rights are to your life, and to the potential longevity of the United States."

To date, Susan Marie has given over 190 living history presentations as Eleanor Roosevelt across 20 of the United States, reaching over 27,000 people. Susan Marie's motto is, "Give me a place to stand, and I will take you somewhere else."

Eleanor Roosevelt – A Walk in History

We are excited to present
Susan Frontczak
performing a
Living History event.

Join the former First Lady and U.N. ambassador as she helps shape the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – a landmark global charter advancing dignity, freedom, and justice.

Date: 30 September 2025
Place: Aurora History Museum
Time: 6.00 pm

Presented by the Aurora Historical Society
Note: Photograph is of Eleanor Roosevelt

**COLORADO
FREEDOM
MEMORIAL**

★-★-★

**Rick Crandall will discuss the
origins of the memorial and plans
for an exciting future expansion.**

★-★-★

Date: 25 November 2025
Place: Aurora History Museum
Time: 6:00 pm

Presented by the Aurora Historical Society



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), 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: Crawford Elementary



The Aurora Central Grade School was built in 1892 on the current site of Crawford Elementary. The building burned down in 1919.



A second school was built on the site. This school was torn down in 1972 as the current building was erected.



Crawford Elementary today

From the Aurora Advocate, Vol 21 No 18
March 19, 1969

The creaky wooden floors, high ceilings, and 2nd story classrooms of Crawford elementary will bring back some memories to many. However probably few Aurorans remember when the 50 year old elementary school was built back in 1919. It was the first school built in Aurora and all classes 1 to 12 were held in the building. The half century old facility is in its last days of glory and will be replaced if the upcoming School Bond Election is passed.

Time waits for no man and our history will eventually become shared memories of people and places. Preservation can help keep those memories a little more tangible so that it, too, can be shared with future generations.



City of Aurora Trivia Questions From Aurora Advocate

1. Sep 1958 – What was the enrollment in Aurora Public Schools? [Vol 11 No 43]
 - a. 1,258
 - b. 1,977
 - c. 2,391



2. Oct 1961 – Florence Henderson sang at which church in Aurora? [Vol 14 No 48]
 - a. Aurora Baptist Church
 - b. Aurora First Presbyterian Church
 - c. St. Pius X Catholic Church



3. Sep 1964 – What \$2.25 million bond issue was proposed for Aurora? [Vol 16 No 43]
 - a. Colfax road improvement
 - b. Hospital
 - c. High School



4. Oct 1967 – What did City Council deny a proposed local establishment? [Vol 19 No 49]
 - a. 3.2 beer by the drink license
 - b. Recycling business license
 - c. Cemetery within city limits



5. Sep 1970 – Where was Aurora's newest recreation complex located? [Vol 23 No 45]
 - a. 30 W. Del Mar Circle
 - b. 2390 Havana
 - c. E. 11th Ave. by Aurora Central H.S.



Aurora Museum Exhibits

Aurora's Short Track: Century 21 Speedway



Community Gallery: Jun 17 – Nov 2, 2025

From 1971 to 1974, the grasslands just south of present-day Denver International Airport rumbled with the noise of dragsters, stock cars and thousands of cheering fans. The Century 21 International Speedway once promised to place Aurora at the heart of the regional motorsports' scene. With a quarter-mile drag strip, a paved oval and figure-eight circuit, Century 21 was a bold and ambitious venue. Visitors to the exhibition will learn about other iconic Front Range tracks and prominent local drivers of the early 1970's.



Prehistoric Aurora

April 22, 2025 to April 5, 2026

Aurorans know the picturesque view of the snowcapped Rocky Mountains or the golden plains with the pronghorn roaming. But what did Aurora look like one million years ago with mammoths and giant sloths. "Prehistoric Aurora" is a journey through geologic time that will take you on a ride through the story of earth's ancient past to the present; showing some of the fossilized plants and animals discovered in Colorado and literally, right here in Aurora's backyard", said T. Scott Williams, Director of the Aurora History Museum "we hope that this immersive exhibit excites and educates visitors of all ages to explore the earth's past and to imagine what life would have been like, when dinosaurs roamed the planet".

On Display in the East Hallway

Aurora's Historic Photos

Photos have a way of connecting the current generation with their past. This exhibit showcases a small sample of the over 30,000 images archived at the Aurora History Museum.

On Display in the Theater Room Trolley Trailer #610

This exhibit takes a deep dive into the history of electric streetcars in the Denver metro area and explores the story of Aurora's Landmark, Trolley Trailer #610 before it was an exhibit at the Aurora History Museum.

This exhibit was chosen to return to our museum by visitors in June and July 2023.

Growing Home & Trolley Trailer No. 610

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.

The Aurora Museum Foundation was instrumental in raising funds and in-kind donations through grants and support from local businesses, organizations, and individuals. The 1,630 square foot gallery was completed in November 2014. The addition was designed by Humphries Poli Architects and built by Palace Construction



Baker, Susan
Barnes, Mildred
Bartholomew, Randy & Barbara
Beach, Mr. & Mrs. Robert L.
Beach, Robert
Benedict, Sally & Van I.
Bennett, Mr. & Mrs. Don
Bottoms, Jack & Ruth
Brown, Dick & Kay
Caldwell, Nadine
Caron, Dean & Theresa
Chase, Gregg & Mary
Crawford, Judi & Jessica
Daniels, Kimberly & William
Drollinger, Don & Carol
Elwell, Tom & Dottie
Essex, Joyce Brown
Evans, Lynne
Fanning, James
Fletcher, Robert & Cindy
Fugler, Carl & Gloria
Gehler, Robert & Terri
Gigikos, John & Lila
Heckman, Dorothy
Heflin, David & Mary
Hensler, Bill & Sue
Hogan, Becky
Jordan, Ralph & Sharon

Keller, Chris & John LeGare, Bob
Letofsky, Jane Anne
Lindemann, Ingrid
Lockwood, Michael & Kathryn
Lord, Pat
Lusche, Jim & Pat
McClure, Kirby & Roberta
McFadden, Joyce
McGrath, Jane & Isaacson, Thomas
Metcalf Jr., Traver
Monroe, Vernon & Helen
Morey, Bill & Teresa
Murray, June
Nicholls, Edwin
O'Brien, Joe & Betsy
Perkins, Steve & Jan
Peters, Charlie
Reynolds, Mr. & Mrs. Walter
Sala, John & Elizabeth
Sanders, Dr. & Mrs. Randall
Scherling, Richard & Beverly
Schmunk, Ruth
Severson, Carl
Sherfick, Donald & Charline
Spencer, Vernon
Steele, Laurence & Virginia
Ulmer, Keith & Mary
Vickers, Mary
Wiggins, William & Lori
Wilterdink, Larry & Carol

In Memoriam

In remembrance of Society members who are no longer with us.

Armstrong, William
Beach Sr., Robert
Creager, Jo (past president)
Dunning, Annabelle (past president)
Fountain, Ruth (past president)
Haag, Col. (Ret) George
Harding, Dexter
Harding, Julie
Hogan, Stephen
Hood, Shirley (past president)
Kerns, Peggy
Lincoln, Joseph & Jeannine
Lindemann, Donald
McClure, Janice
Moore, David
Murray, Bev
Murray, William Jr
O'Brien, Mr. & Mrs. John
Penn, Ruth
Preston, Mary
Sparks, Juanita
Stadt, Florence (past president)
Travis, E.A.
Tupps, Edythe
Watson, Elizabeth
Weddig, Frank & Pat
Whitmore, Ruth
Wiley, Robert
Woodbury, Ruth



Dunning, Anabelle (1976-1979)
Metcalf, Gladys (1980-1981)
Stadt, Florence (1982)
Elwell, Dottie (1983-1984)
Johnson, Elizabeth (1985-1986)
Pierce, Mary (1987-1988)

Creager, Jo (1989-1990)
Sanders, Kathy (1991-1992)
Creager, Jo (1993)
Hood, Shirley (1994-1995)
Brown, Connie (1996-1998)
Betka, Charyn (1999-2000)

Fountain, Ruth (2001-2009)
Sweeney, Sandy (2010-2018)
Evans, Lynne (2019-2025)
Tucker, Dr. Gordon (2025-present)



1441 Elmira Street Empire 6-2626
 Adams County Office: 2356 Lima
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 In Aurora, Colorado

Legal Newspaper for Adams and Arapahoe Counties
 Circulation Figure or Advertising Rates on Request

Advertisements in the Aurora Advocate
 September, 1958 – Vol. 11 No. 43
 September 1961 – Vol. 14 No. 45
 September 1964 - Vol. 16 No. 43

BACK TO SCHOOL ADVERTISEMENTS

Helen of Troy

Salon

teenagers, don't
go back to school
looking like this



try our back to school
special and start school
looking like this



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 school play.

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Edwards styles—
 All sizes for
 boys and girls.



PORTER'S OF AURORA
 10650 E. COLFAX
 Empire 6 6727



what YOU should know about your child's eyes!

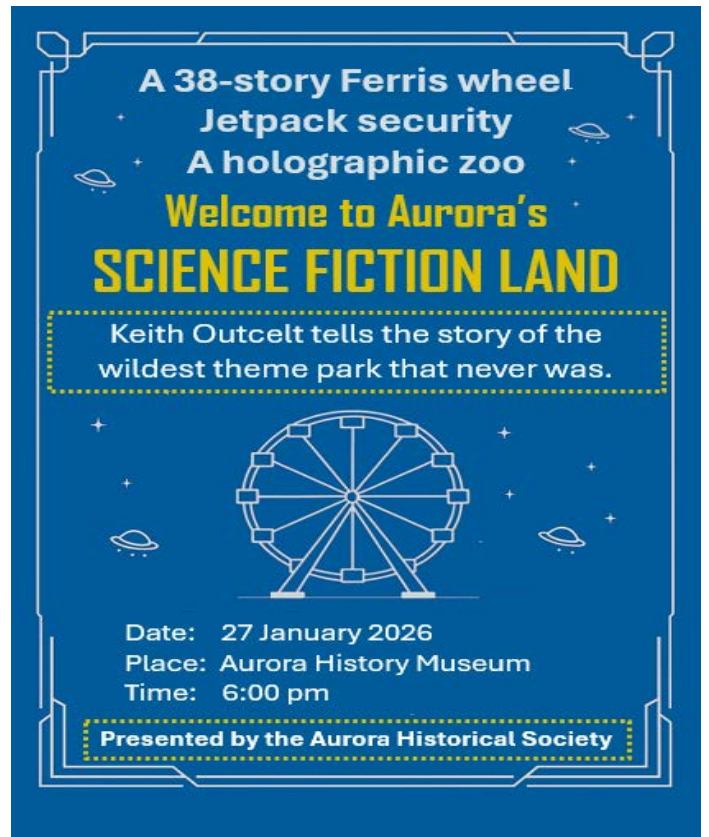
When a child lags behind in school it's easy to assume he's to blame. So often it's not his fault—it's because he can't see well.

And yet he doesn't know it; if he's *always* seen things blurry, he thinks it's *natural* and that *all* people see that way! Even those who do well in school may be straining their nerves and eye muscles to make up for ocular defects. Eventually headaches occur, or "upset stomach."

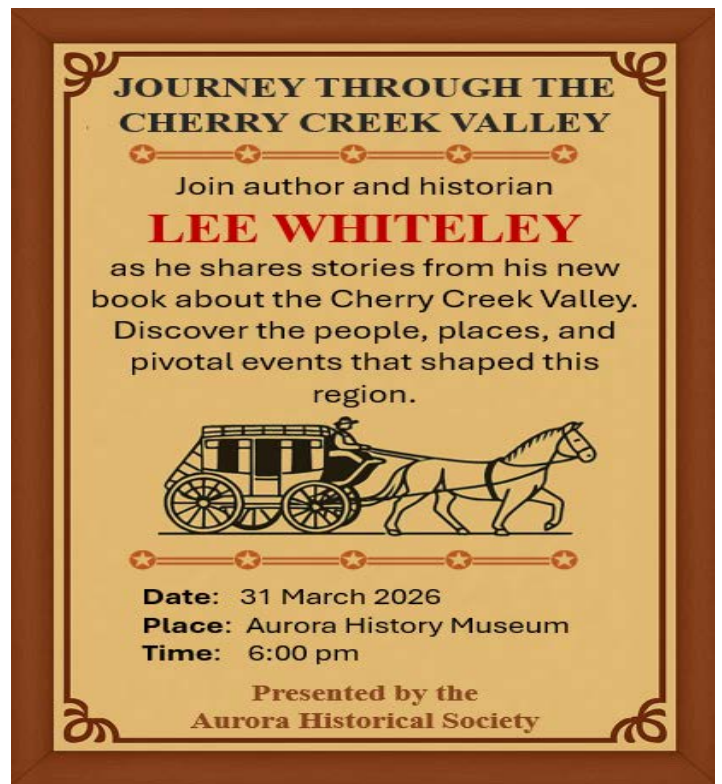
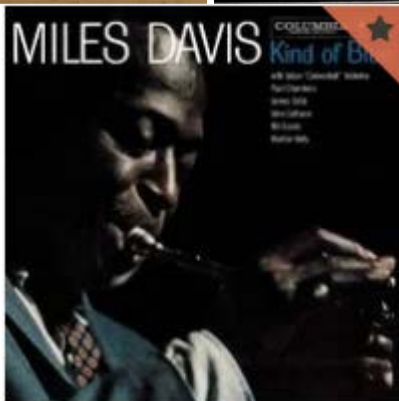
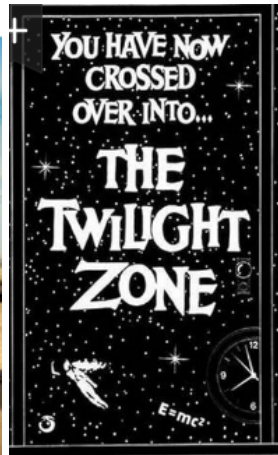
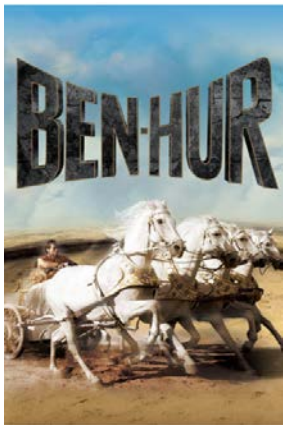
Play safe with your loved ones. See that they get a thorough professional eye examination before they start back to school this Fall.

Dr. John R. Coyle
 Optometrist
9355 E. Colfax
EM 6-3981

Dr. John Coyle: 9355 E. Colfax
 Porters of Aurora: 10650 E. Colfax
 Helen Of Troy Salon: 718 Peoria



From 1959



Movie: Ben-Hur
 TV show: The Twilight Zone
 Music Album: Kind Of Blue – Miles Davis

Trivia Question Answers:

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



We need your Help to preserve Aurora's History!

For just \$1 a page, you can help digitize Aurora's Historic Newspapers. Aurora's old newspapers were stored on Microfiche and now need to be digitized so they are accessible for all.

Digitizing the microfiche film creates an online, searchable database to access photos, articles, and other interesting content. Previously digitized newspapers can be found at Colorado's Historic Newspapers. Write a check and mail it in or donate online

Help Aurora! We hope you will participate in this project sponsored by the Aurora Historical Society & the Aurora History Museum & Historic Sites.

Write a check and
mail it to Gregg
Chase, 25762 E
Kettle Circle,
Aurora, CO, 80016-
2011

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Aurora Historical Society



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<https://auroracohistoricalsociety.org/>

Visit the Colorado Historical Newspaper site

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

Historic Aurora Newspapers – Digitization Project

Yes! I want to give my support with my tax-deductible gift.

_____ \$25 _____ \$50 _____ \$100 _____ Other

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Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____