



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS
1981-2021

Newsletter

of the
Aurora Genealogical Society

Volume XLI, Number 6

General Membership Meetings

No meeting in November

Tuesday, 3 December 2024, 1:00 p.m. via ZOOM

Tuesday, 28 January 2025, 1:00 p.m. via ZOOM

Hoffman Heights Branch Library

1298 Peoria Street

Aurora, CO 80013

Upcoming Meetings

No November Meeting – Happy Holidays

Tuesday, December 3, 2024 @ 1:00 p.m.:

Introduction to the Family History Guide, ZOOM meeting

Presented by Bob Taylor, Developer and Trainer.

The Family History Guide is a free website and best in class online center for learning how to research family history. Its broad scope but narrow focus helps you reach goals step by step, whether you are brand new to family research, a seasoned researcher, or somewhere in between.

Tuesday, 28 January 2025 @ 1:00 pm

Territorial Records in the U.S. – Your might be surprised! ZOOM meeting

Presented by Sylvia Tracy-Doolos, Experienced Genealogist

As our nation grew, territories began to record records to achieve statehood.

Happy Thanksgiving



COMING SOON

Aurora Genealogy Society Room

The Society's new digs will be opening for business soon at the Hoffman Heights Branch Library at 1298 Peoria Street, Aurora CO 80013.

The memorandum of Agreement is ready for signature and the liability insurance is close. Still need to set a move in date and draft a move crew.

If interested in helping, please one of the officers know.

Aurora Genealogical Society of Colorado

P.O. Box 31732
Aurora, CO 80041-0732

e-mail – aurgs1981@yahoo.com

ELECTED OFFICERS

President	Gail Arnert arnertgen@gmail.com
Membership Vice-President	Jeff Adams
Program Vice-President & Publicity	Judy Holtus
Secretary	Vacant
Treasurer	Dick Kautt

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Genealogist	Barb Walker
CCGS Delegate	Jeff Adams
Computer Technical Support	Vickie Smejkal agslibrarian@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Gail Arnert gailarnert@yahoo.com
Newsletter Technical Support	Lori Holtus
Parliamentarian	Dick Kautt
Website, Facebook	Vicki Smejkal

Message from the President

It’s time to renew your membership for 2025. An application is on the last page of this newsletter. Please mail all renewals to the P.O. Box. Remember, if you are 90 or older, no dues are required. Of course, if you would like to donate to one of our funds that would be great. Please return the membership renewal form so we can continue to send you newsletters and invite you to meetings. Also, ensure your new/renewal is postmarked no later than 31 Dec 2024 to receive the least expensive dues rate.

Enjoy the holidays. Listen to and record family stories being shared. Put genealogy related items on your wish list and maybe you’ll get lucky.

See you at the meetings.

Gail

We welcome articles for publication provided:

- 1) They have a general interest in furthering our members’ research, i.e., websites, articles on research facilities near and far, your research trips, etc.
- 2) They have a Colorado connection, preferably Aurora, Arapahoe and Adams counties.
- 3) If not your original work, sources must be cited.
- 4) If a copyright is involved, you must include written permission from the owner of the copyright.

E-mail articles to aurgs1981@yahoo.com or to any elected officer. The editor reserves the right to accept or reject any material submitted. Publication deadlines are the 15th of December, February, April, June, August, and October.

This Newsletter is distributed to libraries and genealogical societies throughout the United States. This publication is also indexed in the Periodical Source Index (PERSI) published by the Allen County Public Library Foundation, Box 2270, Fort Wayne, IN 46801.

*Read the best books first,
or you may not have a chance
to read them all.*

- Henry David Thoreau

Happy Holidays





Aurora Festival of Wreaths

AGS is participating in the Aurora History Museum’s 25th Annual Festival of Wreaths. Jewel Smejkal, Vicki’s daughter, created the above wreath for us. Wreaths will be displayed at the Aurora History Museum 5 Nov – 6 Dec 2024 for people to enjoy. More information at AuroraGov.org/Wreaths, or call 303.739.6660.

Pick up a beautiful handcrafter wreath to enhance your Holiday décor.

Still Need an AGS Secretary

Speaking as the AGS President the Society REALLY needs a Secretary. Several of the Board members are currently holding more than one position. We need help.

Secretary duties include:

- a. Record the proceedings of the Society, both at general membership meetings and meetings of the Board of Directors.
 - b. Act as custodian of the records of the Society except those specifically assigned to others. Maintain copies based on the Records Retention and Disposition Policy.
 - c. Maintain a current inventory of all legal documents, records and equipment belonging to the Society. Maintain copies based on the Records Retention and Disposition Policy.
 - d. Check the mailbox (located at the Hoffman Heights branch in Aurora) at least once a week. Distribute the mail.
 - e. Mail sympathy and other appropriate cards to members or their families.
- That’s it. Give it a try.

Paról Making Workshop with PASCO

Saturday, Nov. 23, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Join the Philippine American Society of Colorado (PASCO) and the Aurora History Museum to create a traditional star-shaped Filipino paper lantern, symbolic of Filipino Christmas celebrations. Traditional Filipino Christmas *Merienda (snacks) will be provided*. Paról Kits are available at the door for \$15 each. Supplies are limited, you can place your order in advance by contacting Rowena Aya at 720-939-7464. Aurora Central Library, 14949 E Alameda Parkway
Additional information can be found on PASCO’s website,

<https://www.philamsocietyofcolorado.org/upcoming-events>

Passing the Torch (notebooks)

--- submitted by Genealogist Barb Walker

Several months ago, I began passing on some of the 3-ring binders of family research that I have been working on for over 30 years. My kids (in their 50s) have always enjoyed hearing family stories but have no room in their homes for the 20+ notebooks of research about people they never heard of. So far, I have donated 2 notebooks to the Nicholas county, Kentucky, Genealogical Society and one to the Miner county, South Dakota Genealogical Society. I contacted each society in advance and asked if they would like to have the information. I visited both societies in the past and found information about my family which had been donated by others researching the same area. They were happy to add the notebooks to their genealogy collection.

My parents were the oldest children in their families. I am the oldest of 10 grandchildren on Dad's side and 12 on Mom's. I asked my cousin Nancy if she would like to have the Wiley notebook, which contained birth, marriage and death certificates as well as photos of her mom and aunts and uncles as children. She was excited to have this family heirloom.

Grandma Laura Chesney married Grandpa Verne Wiley at the insistence of her father. Grandma loved another young man, John Smith, but her father didn't feel John was an acceptable suitor because he was "just a farmer." I remember Gram talking about John Smith all her life. Verne was considered a better match because he was an

electrician and had a better financial future.

Grandma and Grandpa had five children. Mom was the oldest with two brothers and two sisters. Gordon, the youngest child, died in 1939 at 10 months of whooping cough and pneumonia.

In August my daughter, Beth, granddaughter Eilise and I flew to Wisconsin for a long weekend. We visited my hometown (Whitewater), as well as the town where my two kids were born (Burlington) and spent time with family members in other towns. On our last day we got together with Nancy and the Wiley

cousins. I gave them the notebook and told them some of the old family stories I remembered. In addition to birth, marriage and death certificates there were many old newspaper articles I had collected over the years.

Whitewater, Wisconsin, is a university town and its local library has an online collection of local newspaper from 1850 – 2019. The newspaper is searchable, and I have found many interesting stories about family members. Some were happy (weddings, births, and graduations). Others were sad and some quite shocking. They had never heard the story of a distant cousin who murdered his two uncles on their remote farm and stole the small of cash they had hidden in a strongbox.

Whitewater Register, March 23, 1950

Tom Chesney Confesses Axe Murder of His Uncles; Horrible Crime Committed to Get \$300

A shocking double axe murder was solved Wednesday afternoon when Tom Chesney confessed to Rock County

Sheriff Sweeney. Chesney told how he murdered Pat and John Fanning at their secluded farm home Saturday morning. The crime was discovered Monday morning by a bread truck driver. By evening Chesney was suspected but absent.

Chesney, a nondescript farm hand who lived a catch-as-catch-can life in this vicinity, caught a bus to Lima Friday evening to visit his elderly uncles. He went to the barn with Pat and killed him with an axe. Then he returned to the house and murdered John on the porch, leaving the bodies where they fell. Chesney ransacked the house for money, finding approximately \$300 in a strong box. The murderer then walked to Whitewater Lake Inn where he called the Courtesy Cab for a ride to town. The driver noticed he carried a large amount of paper money.

Chesney made the rounds of taverns Saturday and spent the day shopping and paying bills. He purchased a used car and spent the evening in Madison. He drank steadily in Whitewater Sunday and Monday morning after quitting his job at La Grange where he worked as a farm hand.

The investigation was aided by Chief Asbury and his men who traced the taxi ride, his free spending and a bloody coat sent to Pleez-U Cleaners.

Chesney was as clumsy as a criminal could be. His reputation cast suspicion on him first and his possession of money was a novelty appreciated by those who had loaned him funds. He made little effort to cover his tracks or be halfway subtle in his actions following the crime.

You just can't make this stuff up!

Tipton County Vital Records, Indiana

by Valerie Beaudrault, NEHGS

Tipton County, seated in the city of Tipton, is located in central Indiana. The Tipton County Public Library has made a number of vital records databases available on its website. The resources include indexes to county cemeteries, marriages, and obituaries. Click the plus sign to the right of the database title to access the alphabetical index. The data fields for the obituary index include full name, maiden name, age, date of death, date of birth, parents, spouse, newspaper title, date of publication, and page number. Scroll across to view all of the fields. Instructions for searching the indexes have been provided.

Search at <https://www.tiptoncountylibrary.org/>

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Were You or Are You in the Military?

Try this.

Free Access to Ancestry.com library edition and Fold3 with Military ID Card - <https://dodmwrlibraries.org/biography-genealogy>

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Colorado Birth and Death Certificates

Colorado Birth and Death certificates are now available at two locations – Greenwood Village and Aurora.

Learn more at:

arapahoeco.gov/vital records

A Recommendation from our Genealogist, Barb Walker

Gail, I highly recommend the Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society. My Scottish ancestors settled there in the mid-1700s and their website has lots to offer to researchers. Dues are only \$25/year and include a very informative bimonthly newsletter:

<https://wpgs.org/>

The Portal to Texas History Website

- - -Valerie Beaudrault, NEHGS

On its website, The Portal to Texas History is described as “a gateway to rare, historical and primary source materials from or about Texas.” There are 850 collections from more than 500 content partners, comprising more than two million items, that make up the Portal, which was created in the early 2000s. It is maintained by the University of North Texas Libraries. The newspaper collection is largest, with more than one million searchable pages. Resource materials also include photographs, maps, patents, postcards, and yearbooks. Click the Search tab on the homepage to begin your search.

<https://texashistory.unt.edu/>

The linking of the generations, the historical lineage of family, the sharing of love . . . give purpose to life.

- - -Dr. George Landberg

- - - from *The Sunny Side of Genealogy* compiled by Fonda D. Baselt





Aurora Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 31732, Aurora CO 80041-0732

Send check or money order made payable to AGS and this form to:

Membership Vice President, Aurora Genealogical Society, PO Box 31732, Aurora, CO 80041-0732

New _____ or Renewal _____ Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ - _____
(Include your 4-digit ZIP code extension)

Level of Genealogical Experience: beginner intermediate advanced

I need help with: _____

Surnames being researched: _____

May we publish your information in the newsletter or a membership directory? Yes No

E-mail Address(s): _____

Check here if you would like the newsletter e-mailed to you:

Early Membership Dues Payment	\$	20.00	(dues paid prior to 1 January)
Student	\$	22.00	(copy of Student ID required)
Membership Dues	\$	25.00	(90 or older no need to pay dues. please fill out and return form)
Donation to National Archives Gift Fund	\$	_____	
Donation to AGS Speaker Expense Fund	\$	_____	
Total	\$	_____	

THE AURORA GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY of COLORADO meets monthly except in June, July, August and December. All meetings are the 4th Tuesday of the month, at 1pm are held at the Aurora Central Branch Library in the Community Rooms, or via Zoom. Meetings are open to the public.

Board of Directors meetings are held at 1:00 pm the first Monday of each month (unless otherwise noted) except June, July, August and December, via ZOOM. Meetings are open to the membership.

Individuals/Families may join the Society upon paying annual dues of \$25.00 per mailing address. Annual membership starts in January of each year. If you join September through December of any year, the membership includes the following year. Send your remittance along with a membership application, with your name, address and telephone number to:

Membership Vice President, Aurora Genealogical Society, PO Box 31732, Aurora, CO 80041-0732

All members will receive newsletters, electronically or via USPS.

Queries will be accepted for publication as space permits.



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