



Old Aurora Colony

NEWSLETTER OF THE AURORA COLONY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING 2018

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 12

Emma Visits Dr. Keil

Book signing with Jane Kirkpatrick followed by reception with Jane at the Frederick Keil House (see page 2)



June 21

“Sommersonnenwende”

Summer Solstice membership & descendant meeting (see pages 1-2)

July 14

Emma Wakefield Herb Garden Summer Party

presented by
Willamette Valley Herb Society

July 21

Fiber Arts Spin & Dye Day

presented by Aurora Colony
Handspinners Guild

August 10-11

Aurora Colony Days Beer Garden

at the Octagon Building

August 11

Aurora Colony Day

Free Museum Admission &
Living History Activities

August 25

“Occasion at the Octagon”

Fundraising Dinner

October 12-21

46th Annual Quilt Show

“Seeing Stars”

December 1

Christmas Candlelight Tour

The Aurora Colony Historical Society promotes interactive lifelong learning by inspiring curiosity about, and preservation of, the heritage of the Aurora Colony.



4th GRADERS BRING SPRING TO FARM & VILLAGE

The first of the season’s eager 4th graders arrived at the Stauffer-Will Farm on the bright morning of March 19, where our new program manager, Christina Leder, and a crew of wonderful volunteers welcomed them at the barn. By the time June 17 rolls around, some 4,000 children will have visited either the Farm or Aurora Village programs to experience pioneer life. They will auger and saw wood, dip candles, knead dough for bread, and design a quilt block. Kathy Hardman is helping Christina as Farm staff, and Jan Becker is working as Village coordinator. If you would like to dress like a pioneer and help 9- and 10-year-olds learn, call Beth Fleisher at 503.678.5754 or email beth@auroracolony.org.

Do you have *filbert suckers and branches* you could share next year? We have lost our long-time resource for the Farm and Village programs and this year have had to use milled lumber so kids could make their candle holders. Our intrepid volunteers, Steve Freid and Spud Sperb, visited orchards all over the area looking for people willing to share their trimmings — with no luck! If you have leads on *fresh filbert (or cherry or peach) logs or suckers* for next year, about 2” to 3” in diameter, please call the museum.

For ACHS, this program represents our most significant outreach to future generations in fulfillment of our mission. We couldn’t do it without the many volunteers who for 30 years have given thousands of hours of their time to plan, prepare, and carry out this very special program. *Thanks for all you do!*

CELEBRATING MEMBERSHIP: SOMMERSONNENWENDE

Would you like to jump over a bonfire? Sadly, it’s too dangerous to hold a bonfire near our precious historic buildings (and we wouldn’t want you to get hurt.) Nonetheless, we’ll celebrate the German tradition of the Summer Solstice, or



Continued on page 2

SOMMERSONNENWENDE MEMBER EVENT *Continued from page 1*

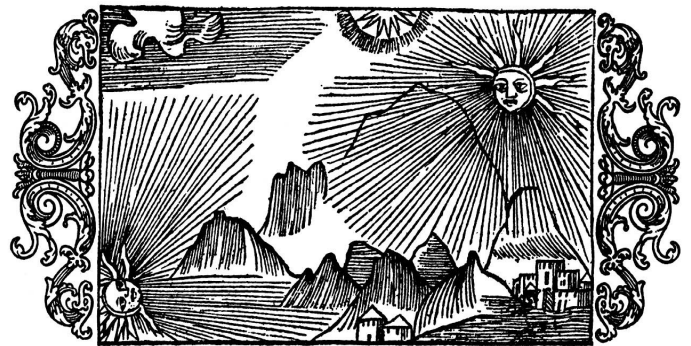
Sommersonnenwende, with a special membership meeting on June 21. To bring members together and inform you about some of the exciting things happening at ACHS, we have decided to do in June something we used to do every month — hold a membership meeting. And what better time or place than the courtyard of the museum complex?

On what we hope will be a beautiful midsummer evening, we'll gather for beer and wine (Germans in the 1600s called this "winebibbing"), enjoy some nibbles, listen to a talk by Patrick Harris, and head out on a walking tour of Aurora. Things are still in the planning stages, but what we know for sure is that we want YOU, our members and descendants, to attend.

This event is open to members and descendants only—a great reason to join ACHS if you haven't done so already! Not a member? You can join on your way in. We'll have a cash bar stocked by Christopher Bridge Winery of Oregon City, which specializes in German-style wines, including Ehrenfelser and Gewurtztraminer and some tasty Pinots. Good local brews will also be available.

Older members may remember that back in the day, ACHS held *monthly* membership meetings! Seriously! These meetings were very well attended for many years and always featured a guest speaker addressing topics of historic interest. We're not sure anyone, including staff and board members, has time these days to do a monthly meeting, but we would like to have a few evenings during the year where we get together to focus on Aurora history — and our strongest supporters.

Hope to see you on June 21, 2018, at 6:30 p.m. Mark your calendars now!



EMMA DAY WITH JANE KIRKPATRICK FEATURES FREDERICK KEIL HOUSE

Tickets are going quickly for this year's book signing with Jane Kirkpatrick, author of the beloved trilogy of novels about Emma Wagner Giesy of Aurora.

This year, admission comes with a special opportunity to see a significant Colony home in private hands that is rarely open to the public. The owners of the Frederick Keil house, Michael and Stephanie Sutch, have generously made their National Register home available to ACHS for an author reception. Cap off a full day of history with Jane as you enjoy tasty treats and



tour several rooms in the home, built for the son of Colony founder William Keil.

The day starts at the museum at 10 a.m. with a book signing in Emma's parlor with Jane Kirkpatrick, followed by a talk by Jane. The group will then travel to the Keil House. Since parking is not available at the house, we are working on van transportation.

ACHS's Patrick Harris will offer an optional visit to Emma's gravesite at the end of the reception.

Tickets are \$40 per person and are available on the museum website or by calling 503.678.5754.



Emma Visits Dr. Keil
A book signing with author
Jane Kirkpatrick
Plus Tea at Aurora's
Historic Frederick Keil House

Mother's Day Weekend
Saturday, May 12, 2018, 10 a.m.
Old Aurora Colony Museum
15018 Second St NE, Aurora OR 97002
Continuing with a tea with Jane at the
1870 Frederick Keil House



Tickets \$40 at www.auroracolony.org or 503-678-5754

ANNUAL MEETING REPORT

ACHS members gathered for socializing and a potluck lunch prior to the annual business meeting of the Society on February 10, 2018. Board President Spud Sperb called the meeting to order at 12:50 p.m. He introduced the current board, and attendees voted in two new members: Bill Bennett and Carol Burger. The Board recognized outgoing ACHS Secretary Cheryl Burks with a bouquet of roses in appreciation for her hard work and dedication.



Spud and Patrick Harris presented the financial report, highlighting two major resources: ACHS's Snyder Fund is restricted to "interest only" spending. The Endowment Fund is unrestricted and was tapped in 2017 to cover replacement of the Giesy Store's air-conditioning unit, replacement of the water pump and piping at the Stauffer-Will Farm, as well as costs beyond the Stauffer family's generous donation for the replacement of the roof of the Stauffer-Will farmhouse.

Spud reported on the Preservation & Research Center. Lee and Connie Kearney have generously pledged \$500,000 toward the building. We are extremely grateful for their commitment to the construction of the

building to preserve Colony artifacts. (Lee is a Colony descendant.) In 2017, the State of Oregon granted ACHS \$400,000 toward the building with the stipulation it must be ready for occupancy by April 2020. Further financing is being pursued through additional grant requests and individual donations. Patrick reminded the membership, "No contribution is too big or too small."

Patrick spoke about the Forstner and Bier families. The current exhibit in the Ox Barn highlights inventions and innovations of these two Colony families and their descendants. Patrick offered a tour to interested members following the meeting.

Patrick introduced ACHS's new volunteer coordinator, Beth Fleisher. She reported that since her hiring in October she has recruited 20 new volunteers. Volunteers are the lifeblood of non-profit organizations and Beth noted the monetary value of ACHS volunteer hours during 2017 was at least \$50,000. She invited volunteers to a Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon on February 23rd, 2018.

Patrick announced the upcoming Spring/Summer events: Spinning Wheel Showcase (March 10 & 11), Remembering Emma (May 12), Colony Day Family Friendly Beer Garden (August 10 & 11) and Occasion at the Octagon (August 26). The Strawberry Social will not be held this year as attendance has declined and lost money in 2017. Replacing the Strawberry Social will be the second of three membership meetings planned for 2018. The third membership meeting is tentatively planned as a "kick off" for the ACHS Quilt Show in October. A revival of the December Candlelight Tour is also in the works.

Joyce Holmes, daughter of Zane and Vera Yoder, announced that she is ready to part with a number of Colony artifacts currently in her home. Roberta Hutton suggested the items be presented for auction at the Occasion at the Octagon, with the items being donated to the museum.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



ACHS Annual Meeting

February 10, 2018



BOARD NOTES

The Aurora Colony Historical Society Board of Directors (BOD) meets the fourth Tuesday of every month. Society members and the public are always welcome. If there is a specific concern you'd like the board to address, please provide information regarding the issue three days prior to the meeting. This will allow time for the Board to prepare so members can speak to your concern in an informed manner. Anyone interested in serving on the Board may speak with President Spud Spurb or Executive Director Patrick Harris.

Board meetings address staff activities and concerns; financial matters including the state of the budget and the Society's investment accounts; fundraising, and building maintenance issues. Additionally, board members report on special events they chair. Duties and tasks are assigned as members of the board brainstorm solutions to issues.

The BOD recently welcomed two new members, Bill Bennett and Carol Burger. Bill, a retired attorney, is a long time ACHS member and contributor. Carol is also a long-time member, contributor and a member of the ACHS hand quilters.



Carol Burger



Bill Bennett

A NEW FACE IN THE OFFICE

Caroline Queer has joined ACHS as our part-time Business Manager. She will be handling fiscal tasks, wrangling with our aging technology, supporting board and museum operations, and helping with programs and events. Caroline (pronounced -len, not -line) recently moved to Canby to be near family, after a long career as a corporate employee at Walmart headquarters. She also works part-time doing similar work for the Aurora Presbyterian Church.



Caroline Queer

ACHS is pleased to have Caroline on board to help us move forward during a time of many exciting upcoming changes! Please stop by the museum and say hello —Caroline is usually in on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

SPIN ME A YARN...



Our wonderful partners in the Aurora Colony Handspinners Guild brought their antique spinning wheels and their lively energy to the museum for a weekend of fiber fun March 10-11. More than 35 spinning wheels, all at least 100 years old, were in constant use.

HELP WANTED

- ◆ Volunteer electrician to put up three replacement light fixtures at the Ox Barn
- ◆ Volunteer carpenter to fix some porch railings at Stauffer Will Farm

Call 503.678.5754 or e-mail beth@auroracolony.org if you can help!

HAPPY TRAILS, ELIZABETH

Longtime museum stalwart Elizabeth Corley retired in February after some 18 years in the ACHS office. She was a fixture at museum events and especially enjoyed the annual Aurora Colony Quilt Show—and the many people she met along the way. We wish Elizabeth all the best in her retirement!

Elizabeth Corley with ACHS Vice President Ken Hartley at the February 2018 annual meeting.



AURORA TO JOIN IN 175th OREGON TRAIL ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Wagons ho! ACHS will join historical groups from around Oregon to set up a trail encampment celebrating the 175th anniversary of the first Oregon Trail journeys. Wagons will circle at the End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in Oregon City (EOT) August 25 and 26, along with a variety of pioneer reenactors. There will be wagon rides, lectures, food, games, music, crafts, and more.

Among the demonstrators will be ACHS volunteer Cathy Harper showing how pioneers did laundry, while cooper Tom Harper will demonstrate bucket making. Patrick Harris will give a talk at the center on Sunday, August 26.

This free event is the same weekend as ACHS's fundraising dinner, the Occasion at the Octagon, but we hope to find a few volunteers to sit with the wagon and share information about Aurora's Trail adventures on Saturday and Sunday. Contact the museum if you are interested!

Here are a few highlights from 175th activities planned this year at EOT:

June 16—Tumwata Lecture presented by Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde

July 27 — Free Trail Band Concert

August 25-26 — End of the Oregon Trail 175th Anniversary Celebration

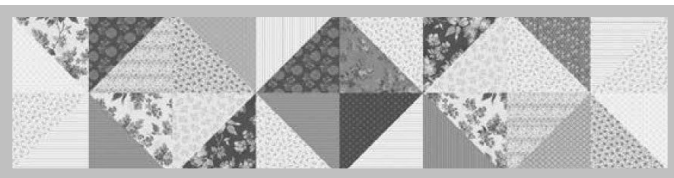
Follow events on Facebook: [@175oregontrail](https://www.facebook.com/175oregontrail)



Doug Houk made the replica Willie Keil coffin for the 1993 Oregon Trail trek of the Willie Wagon from Missouri to Aurora. The wagon will be one of many on display at the End of the Oregon Trail 175th anniversary August 25-26.

QUILT BLOCK CONTEST: RHAPSODY IN BLUE

Ready to unleash your creativity? ACHS is now accepting entries for our annual Quilt Block Contest. This year's theme is *Rhapsody in Blue*. We challenge quilters to enter blue and white quilt blocks, with fabric choices limited to blue (solid or print) and white (or white on white). The top 20 quilt blocks will be set into a raffle quilt hand-quilted by the Aurora Colony Quilters.



2018 QUILT BLOCK CONTEST GUIDELINES

- **Colors:** Any color of blue (solid or print) and white (or white on white)
- **Size:** 12½" x 12 ½" to finish as a 12" x 12" block
- Use prewashed 100% cotton fabric
- Do not set blocks on point
- Block may be pieced and/or appliquéd but appliquéd must be trimmed on back
- No fusing of fabrics – too difficult to hand quilt
- Entries limited to 2 blocks per person
- Bring entries to the Old Aurora Colony Museum, 15018 2nd St. N.E., Aurora, OR 97002, or mail to: Old Aurora Colony Museum, P.O. Box 202, Aurora, OR 97002. Do not mail entries to the street address.
- Quilt Blocks due Friday, October 19, 2018, at 4 p.m.



WE ♥ VOLUNTEERS

The Old Aurora Colony Museum celebrated its volunteers February 23 with a lunch at the Christ Lutheran Church. Richard Sanchez (Dine'/Navaho) played the Native American flute – he shared a Blessing Song before the meal, and he played an Honor Song to honor volunteers from our various events and programs throughout the year. Volunteer Coordinator Beth Fleisher introduced some of our new volunteers. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers, old and new!

VISITING THE BETHEL COLONY

By Ken Hartley

How many of us have visited the site of William Keil's first community? Given its remote location in Missouri, not many. But I first visited Bethel, Missouri, in the late 1940s or early 1950s with my parents, sister, and grandparents. We routinely took Sunday afternoon drives twice a month to explore places of interest close to our home town of Moberly.

Bethel is approximately 50 miles northeast of Moberly, thus well within the range of such a daily excursion. These trips were a way for us to share quality time together as well as experience various communities, cuisines, and seasonal changes.

Given my interest in Aurora, it made sense to revisit Bethel when I returned to the area to see relatives in 2014. Aurora's founding was so closely linked to Bethel that I wanted to walk its streets again and see its buildings, of which 26 Colony structures still stand. I also visited the nearby Shelby County Historical Society in Shelbina.

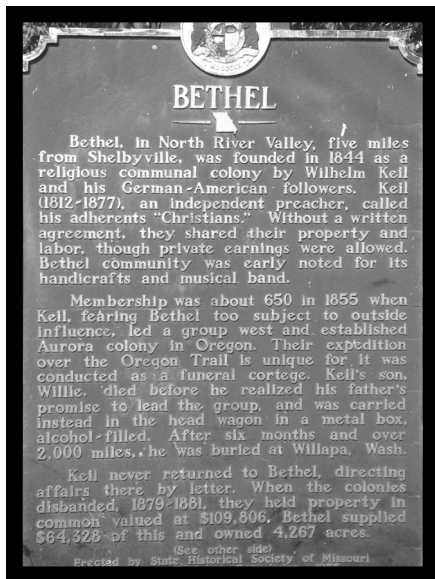
I have enjoyed these visits so much that I've done a good amount of reading about Bethel. I especially enjoyed a 1990 publication, *Bethel German Colony 1844-1883*, by Adolf E. Schroeder, Professor Emeritus, German Studies, University of Missouri. Its cover includes the English translation of the Colony's German-language motto: "Many hands make quick work." I share here some extracts from Schroeder's work:

"Bethel German Colony, located 48 miles west of Hannibal on the banks of the North River in Shelby County, Missouri, is still home today to descendants of its 19th century settlers, who founded one of the most successful communal societies in the United States...

"The history of such intentional communities as Bethel is the history of the idea that mankind once lived in a state of perfect harmony, an idea which flourished in the political, religious, and social ferment that characterized Europe, particularly German-speaking Europe, in the centuries following the Protestant

Reformation... Transplanted to the United States and moving westward with the American frontier, the dream of achieving a perfect society resulted in a variety of Utopian communities formed by groups which had come to America to exercise the freedom of religion guaranteed by the American constitution but frequently denied them in Europe.

"Bethel was one of the most informally organized of the Utopian communities established in the United States during the years of widespread experimentation in communal living that characterized the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries, but it seemingly achieved a harmonious lifestyle as well as a remarkable economic success. Formed by the charismatic Wilhelm Keil in Phillipsburg, Pennsylvania in 1844, the group was largely drawn from former members of the German Methodist Church, which developed in the 1830's as immigrant congregations of the Methodist Episcopal Church, from the Harmony Society, which had been established by George Rapp in 1805... These were joined by other converts to Keil's doctrine of Christian communal life, won by articulate and dedicated young disciples he sent out to preach in neighboring states. Promised nothing but bread, water and hard work by Keil, his followers sold their property in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and other states, committed the proceeds to the vision of their leader, and prepared to undertake the arduous journey to the Far West to



establish their Colony on the sparsely settled prairies of north Missouri. Three scouts had selected the site for their first settlement and in the autumn of 1844 Keil and his family, with a few others, arrived to spend a winter of considerable hardship on the property on the North River. The following spring other colonists began arriving, among them many skilled craftsman, and energetically set about to erect dwellings, community buildings, and other necessary structures.

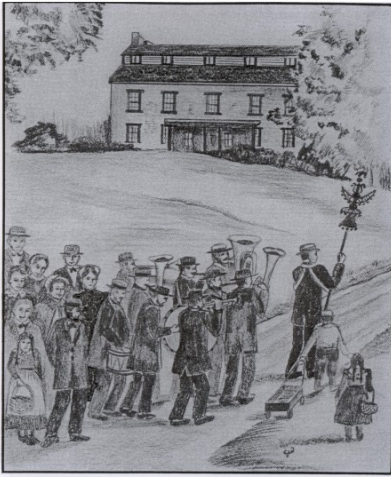
"It is generally agreed that former members of the Harmony Society, accustomed to the communal life

Continued on page 7

VISITING BETHEL *Continued from page 1*

and each a master of some necessary trade, were largely responsible for the rapid development of the Colony. All the buildings were large and sturdy, of brick manufactured in the Colony. A mile east of Bethel, they built a dwelling of massive proportions for Wilhelm Keil and his family. Strongly reminiscent of 18th century Pennsylvania German architecture, constructed of brick and stone, fifty-two by thirty-six feet in size and two and a half stories high, Elim demonstrated the remarkable skills as well as the devotion to their leader of the early settlers...

“By September of 1847, when a visitor traveled to the Colony from Shelbyville, he found the village pleasantly situated on the gradual slope leading down to the north shore of the North River. Across the wooden bridge was an extensive tannery on the right



side and on the left a 'large pile of buildings comprising a lumber mill, flouring mill, distillery (home of the 'Golden Rule' whiskey), and a carding and spinning establishment, all propelled by steam.' ...

“On either side of the street, dwellings

of brick [manufactured in Bethel] were placed at regular intervals and ... a large hotel was under construction. Further on, about a mile from the river, an impressive church was nearing completion... There were several residences in Bethel which evinced a 'fine taste,' but he found that of Dr. Keil most striking. Beyond the town to the north were cultivated fields and prairie pastures. The writer discovered the settlers to be friendly and communicative, and adjudged their 'peaceful hamlet as the abode of contentment, happiness, and plenty,' wishing that a 'thousand such colonies would take possession of the prairies and forests of Missouri, now waste and unpeopled, and cause them to smile under the magic touch of cultivation.'...

The Move West and the Dissolution of Bethel Colony

“By 1855, Bethel Colony had a population of 650 residents and its property included almost 4,000 acres in Shelby County as well as over 700 acres in [adjoining] Adair County. Its industries were thriving

and its people contented. Yet Wilhelm Keil had grown increasingly more restless throughout the 1850s and in 1855, after sending scouts west to locate a site for a new colony, a group from Bethel Colonies prepared to depart Missouri. In late May ... twenty-five wagons with about seventy-five people left Bethel for the 2,000 mile trip overland... Eventually, in the Willamette Valley in Oregon, the new Colony was established. Keil named it Aurora” for his daughter., as we know ...

“For the next two decades, Bethel in Missouri and Aurora in Oregon were held to their purpose by the magnetic personality of Wilhelm Keil and the devotion and loyalty of his followers. During this time, many Bethel colonists made their way to Oregon...

Upon the death of Wilhelm Keil in December 1877, “the force that held the separated Colonies together was gone. It was soon decided to dissolve the bonds between the Colonies, and ... a division of common holdings was achieved... June 30, 1879. Bethel Colony itself, which by then had only 200 residents, was dissolved in 1879, with each member receiving what he or she had contributed to the common property... A final decree dissolving the Colonies was signed in Oregon in 1883.

“Jacob Miller tried to reorganize Bethel Colony and had a small following for a time, but the plan was eventually abandoned. Bethel was incorporated as a town in 1883.”

Bethel was placed in the United States National Register of Historic Places in 1970. It was noted as consisting of 26 properties and is described as a “town begun in 1844.” Bethel’s population in the 2010 U.S. Census was 122.

HELP WANTED

- ◆ Groundskeepers
- ◆ Building Maintenance Workers
- ◆ Living History Tour Guides
- ◆ Tech Support/Website Help
- ◆ Museum Front Desk Greeters
- ◆ Data Entry Workers
- ◆ Office Helpers

**Call 503.678.5754 or e-mail
beth@auroracolony.org
if you can help!**



Old Aurora
—Colony—

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
AURORA, OR 97002
Permit No. 9

KEEP IN TOUCH with ACHS

 Find us on
facebook.

MUSEUM:
@oldauroracolonymuseum

VOLUNTEERS:
@auroracolonyvolunteercommunity

On the web:
www.auroracolony.org

Phone: 503.678.5754

Fax: 503.678.5756

Find us:
Mailing address: P.O. Box 202, Aurora, OR 97002

Street address: 15018 Second Street NE
(Corner of Second & Liberty Streets)
Aurora, Oregon 97002



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Guy Sperb, *President*
Ken Hartly, *Vice President*
Brian Asher, *Treasurer*
Carol Burger, *Secretary*
Bill Bennett Luana Hill James Moore
Chéré Moore Nancy Woodyard

STAFF

Patrick Harris, *Executive Director*
Caroline Queer, *Business Specialist*
Beth Fleisher, *Volunteer Coordinator*
Christina Leder, *Stauffer-Will Farm Coordinator*
Kathy Hardeman, *Stauffer-Will Farm Assistant*
Jan Becker, *Aurora Village Coordinator*
Janus Childs, *Weekend Tour Guide*