



# Old Aurora Colony

NEWSLETTER OF THE AURORA COLONY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINTER 2020

## 2020 CALENDAR

### January —

Museum closed in January;  
reopens February 1

### February 10 —

Farm Program Volunteer  
Brunch & Meeting  
10 a.m. at the museum

### February 15 —

Annual Meeting & Potluck  
11 a.m., Christ Lutheran Church

### March 14-15 —

Antique Spinning Wheel  
Showcase with the Aurora  
Colony Handspinners' Guild  
Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Sunday Noon to 4 p.m.

### April 4 —

Dedication of the Will Family  
Preservation & Research Center  
2 p.m.

### May 9 —

Emma Day with author  
Jane Kirkpatrick

### July 11 —

Willamette Valley Herb Society  
Lavender Day

### July 18 —

Aurora Colony Handspinners'  
Guild Dye Day

### August 7 —

Colony Days Beer Garden

### August 8 —

Aurora Colony Day

### August 29 —

Celebrate the Colony  
Dinner & Auction

### October 9-18 —

48<sup>th</sup> Annual Quilt Show:  
"20/20 Visions of Joy"  
10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily

### November 28 —

Christmas in Aurora

## DEDICATION IS APRIL 4 FOR NEW WILL FAMILY PRESERVATION & RESEARCH CENTER Dream becomes reality thanks to generous donors

**“WE** ARE OFFICIALLY DONE, 2½ months ahead of schedule to boot!” So announced ACHS Board President Spud Sperb after he picked up the official occupancy permit issued by the City of Aurora for the new Will Family Preservation & Research Center on January 14, 2020.

Landscaping remains to be done in the weeks leading up to the **building dedication Saturday, April 4, at 2 p.m.** Having the permit means that ACHS has met its obligation to the state of Oregon, which provided \$400,000 towards the project on condition that construction be completed by April 2020.

Having the permit also means that the gradual process of moving artifacts into the center can begin. Staff and board members have been planning the move to take place in gradual stages so that all items going into the building are processed according to recognized museum standards. Items that have been stored in the basement of the Giesy Store building, for example, must be inspected, prepared, and possibly treated to make sure molds and pests do not make the journey with them.



About 30 ACHS members had a sneak preview of the facility during an open house held December 15. Spud Sperb, above left, shows some of the shelving to Connie and Lee Kearney, whose \$500,000 donation was key to proceeding with the project. Lee is a descendant of colony member Anton Will and his daughters Myra Ida and Mary Triphina. Above right, Spud points out features of a humidity control system, one of four in the building. Top right: Mary Ann Moore, Chris Thomas-Flitcroft, Mark Epp.

## ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK FEBRUARY 15 AT 11 A.M.

**M**useum director Patrick Harris will update ACHS members on the status of the Aurora Colony Historical Society, including a financial report, news on the opening of the new Will Family Preservation & Research Center, the success of our Farm and Village programs for 4<sup>th</sup> graders, and the updated Strategic Plan. Lunch will be a traditional potluck. Beverages and service ware will be provided. Please bring a salad, main dish, or dessert according to the following schedule:

**Last Name Letters A-I: Dessert**  
**Letters J-Z: Main Dish, Salad, or Soup**

Following the lunch and meeting, Patrick will lead a tour of the new Will Family Preservation & Research Center. The museum is also open for visitors.

In 2019, this event included volunteer recognitions, but this year there will be a separate event to recognize our wonderful volunteers.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

**A**s construction of the new center wraps up, the Board has been finalizing the next Strategic Plan for ACHS and looking at what comes next. Once items are moved from the Ox Barn to the new center, ACHS will have an opportunity to rethink the use of museum space for exhibits and programs. Exciting times!

Planning is already under way for the next Celebrate the Colony Dinner in August, and the Board seeks members who would like to serve on an auction procurement committee. Contact Christina if you are interested.

Board member Luana Hill, whose second three year term expires in February, plans to take a break from board service but continue with the newsletter and some museum communications. Ken Riley resigned before the holidays to spend more time with grandchildren. This means ACHS needs two to five additional board members to help ensure future stewardship of the society. Diane Anderson is expected to join the board in February. If you would like to serve, or know someone who would make a good Board member, please contact Patrick Harris.

## 2020 EMMA DAY MAY 9 GOES “DOWN BY THE RIVER”



**E**mma Wagner Giesy (b. 1833) was the firstborn child of David and Catherine Zundel Wagner. Her parents had been raised within the Harmony Society under the leadership of George Rapp. Believing in the imminent second coming of Jesus, most of the Harmonists adopted celibacy as a way to purify their lives for the arrival of their

savior. Most were also, however, already married with children, and when these children, including David Wagner and Catherine Zundel, grew to adulthood, they challenged the celibacy rule. David Wagner was one of the leaders of an 1832 rebellion which resulted in a split within the Harmonist ranks. He then married Catherine Zundell and Emma was their first borne child. David, however, never gave up his belief in the truth of communal living as the best lifestyle for the Christian and in 1845 he joined William Keil in his new venture organized at Bethel, Missouri.

It was at Bethel that Emma met Christian Giesy, the eldest child of fifteen born to Andrew and Barbara Giesy. Christian was one of Keil’s first evangelists,

helping to gather the colony’s new membership together. In 1852 Christian (who was 37) married nineteen year old Emma and one year later this couple, along with eight other German and Swiss men, crossed the Oregon Trail to scout out a new western site for Keil’s colony.



*Jane Kirkpatrick*

The readers of the three novels written by Jane Kirkpatrick know much of the rest of the story. What is not so well known is that Emma’s family owned private property and that a portion of that property still remains in the family. Dr. David Wagner and his wife Mary Lou have invited guests to their property on Saturday May 9, where we will

“Remember Emma” in the fashion of Emma’s parents and her siblings.

**Plan to join us May 9!** We are still working out final details and itinerary, but early sign-ups are available now by calling the museum at **503.678.5754**. Tickets will go on sale after February 15 via our website, [www.auroracolony.org](http://www.auroracolony.org), with a limit of 100 people.

# Thank you — You made it happen!

All donations to the ACHS Will Family Preservation & Research Center received or pledged through January 20, 2020

## BUILDING NAMING RIGHTS: \$500,000

### Connie & Lee Kearney

(Naming the building the Will Family Preservation & Research Center)

<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>SILVER: \$10,000-\$24,999</b>	<b>BRONZE: \$5,000-\$9,999</b>
State of Oregon	Austin Foundation	Shirley Will
<b>\$211,000</b>	AOH Foundation	Lavina Windh
MJ Murdock Charitable Trust	Reg & Ann Keddie	Chuck Scott
<b>PLATINUM: \$50,000 &amp; HIGHER</b>	Brady & Diane Kocher Downs	Bill & Marlene Wettstein
Barbara Giesy	Jim & Dottie Waddell	Byron & Dorothy Schriever
Ken & Sandi Hartley	Dr. David Wagner	Elisabeth Walton Potter
	Alan & Elizabeth Southwell	Dr. Robert & Mary Ann Moore
<b>PEWTER: \$1,000-\$4,999</b>	Spud & Sally Sperb	Marcia & Tim Clark-McKittrick
Tarbell Foundation	Donnie & Pamela Weninger	Louise Hankenson
Ted & Andrea Heid	Karen & James Young	Della Ward
Bill & Martha Bennett	Gary Zimmerman	Darwin & Sandra Dittmar
Susan Black & John Berard	Michael Truman	Marilyn Thompson
Iselin Architects	Nancy Snyder	Charles & Edith Weiss
Linda Giesy Gilham	Nancy Snyder & Jill Snyder in memory of Carl & Hazel Snyder	Verne Duncan
John Herman	Nancy Snyder in memory of Charles & Christina Schuele Snyder	Arthur Martin
Marvin & Devina Stearns	Jill Snyder Marr & Jason Marr	Jane Richardson
Gladys Thommen	Ronald & Evie Berg	Ron Knight
Cathy & Tom Harper	Norm & Shirley Will Hall	Bill Kennemer
Intel Matching Grant to Harpers	Joan & Jake Jacobs	William H Snyder
Richard & Doris Lauer		Carol Patrick
Bob & Donna Setterberg	<b>CONTRIBUTIONS UP TO \$1,000</b>	Christine Meinicke
John Schuele	Nic & Billie Kaiser	Wendy Bents Patterson
Frank & Carol Burger	Ernie & Joyce Laitinen	Arlene Anderson
Rob & Nancy Downie	Marge McCanse	Richard Schwabauer
Dick & Diane Anderson	Diana Hasz	Susan Rump Steinbach
Aurora Colony Handspinners' Guild	Elizabeth Heininge	Lee & Ginger Ashworth
Judi & Alfred B. Aus	Johanna Dekay	Silloway Weaving Studio
Brynn Beals	Kim Higgins	Mella Dee Fraser
Don Beals	Susan Clark & Will Newman	Elisa Dale
Marc & Tamara Berube in honor of Laverne "Andy" Martin	Sylvia Dion	Joyce Holmes
Dottie & Paul Carr	Allen & JoAnne Daly	Ann Ransmeier
Mary Beebe Crofts	Walt & Charlotte Wirfs	Dianne Crisell
Joe & Linda Dryden	James & Barbara Gentry	Diane Roubal
Bill & Margaret Hansell	William & Mary Taylor	Edith Owen
Susan Hazel & Gene Georgetta	Melissa Meacham Stewart	Philip Giesy
W.R. Giesy	Jan & Ken Becker	Kaye Whitmer
Luana & Bob Hill	Nancy Jensen	Cherie McGinnis
Cheryl Burks	Loraine Nevill	Paul Minton
Emily Hitchens	Darlene Ward	Dale & Linda Forrest
Roberta Hutton	Darla Brock	Bob Jackson & Deborah Zeigler
Gary & Elaine Ihle	Margaret Torgeson	Elizabeth Scully
Fred W. Keil	Diane Strong in memory of Nancy Woodyard	Donna & Marian Minar
Pheasant Run Tasting Room— (St. Josef's Winery)	Jack & Lee Fosmark	Patricia Lindquist
Edward A. & Kathleen Miller	Mary Bardell	Susan Arnold
	Dr. John Schilke	Marge Geiser Barnhart
	James Barry	Carol Cooper
	Meshara Galland	Judy Kazmar
	Dr. Lee Wolfer	Robert Steinbach
		Scott & Cynthia Caufied
		Anonymous
		Tom Wanner
		Ellen Thomas & Fred Cann

**Quilt Show**  
*"Rhapsody in Blue"*



*Pam Leder, best in theme (Rhapsody in Blue)*



*Left: Lynda Kornya, lucky winner of the 2019 raffle quilt, Rhapsody in Blue, made from 2018 winning blocks and quilted by the talented Aurora Colony Quilters*



*Right: Roberta Hutton sells tickets for the raffle quilt*



*Featured quilter Debbie Gsell Miller in the Kraus House*



*Carrie Perkins, best in show, "Sara's Irish Chain"*



*Joyce Laitinen, Willamette Valley Herb Society*



**A Ghostly Halloween**

*Thanks to Dr. Joe Young for partnering with ACHS to provide healthy treats in the courtyard on Halloween. We had a ghoulishly good time!*



**Communal Society Dinner in the Kraus House**

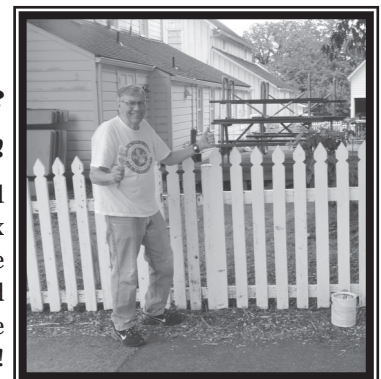
*A small group of donors dined on Shaker, Amana, Old Salem and Aurora recipes, cooked and served by Luana Hill, Sharon Schneider & Dale Rushton*



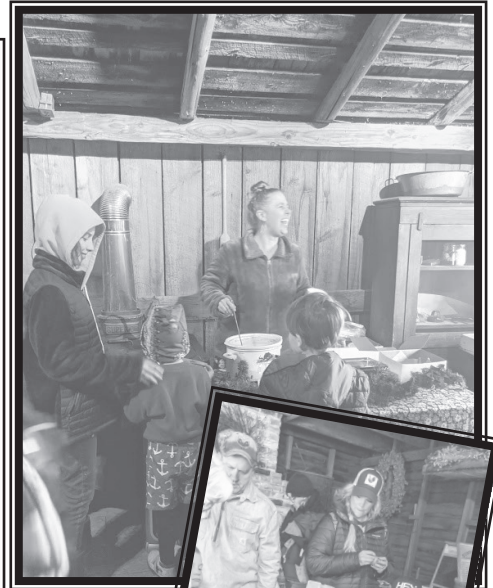
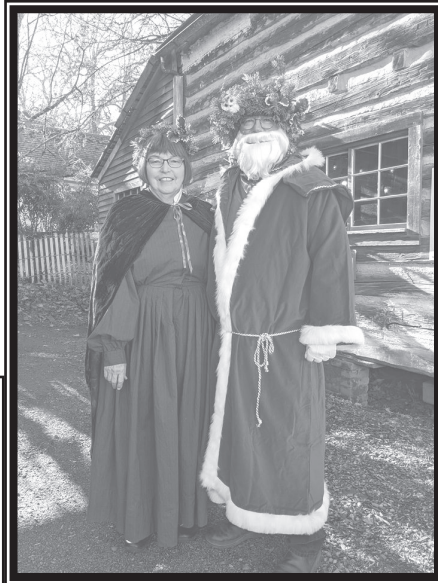
**TOM SAWYER?**

**NO, KEN HARTLEY!**

After Luana Hill repainted the front porches of the Ox Barn, Ken grabbed the leftover paint and started working on some fence repairs. Thanks, Ken!

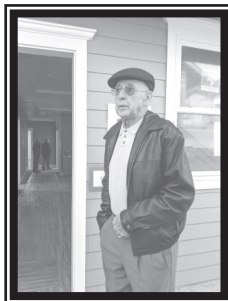


# Christmas in Aurora



*Clockwise from top left: Cheryl Burks helps with cinnamon ornaments, Spud & Sally Sperb channel their inner Father (& Mother) Christmas, Tara Weidman serves refreshments in the Steinbach cabin, crafters make clove & orange pomanders, and Heartstrings entertains in the Ox Barn. We love their beautiful music, which they so generously share with us at many of our events!*

## More snaps from the Open House at the Will Family Preservation & Research Center



### VOLUNTEER CORNER

Thanks to all the volunteers who made these wonderful events possible. We couldn't do it without our volunteers! And we're always delighted when fresh new faces come forward. We'd like to welcome two new volunteers who are donating the precious gift of time:



← **Suzanne Brown** is a retired nurse anesthetist with a passion for history, and she will resume her new volunteer post at the Front Desk of the museum on Tuesdays when the museum reopens in February. Along with Pamela Weninger, Cathy Harper, Karen Young, and Janus Childs, we now have coverage every day. Suzanne is interesting to talk to — come meet her!

**Katie Cam** is a local Realtor who has offered to pop in and work on membership updates for us. She'll be sending out renewals, membership cards, and keeping our records up to date. Thank you Katie! →



## NANCY RUTH JUNKEN WOODYARD

Oct. 12, 1938 - Oct. 22, 2019

Colony descendant Nancy Woodyard passed away Oct. 22, 2019, due to complications associated with ALS. She had contributed her time and talents to service on the ACHS Board of Directors in recent years until her illness progressed. She enjoyed reaching out to other descendants to generate their support for museum projects and operations and took an active role in planning the museum's fundraiser dinners.

Patrick Harris wrote this on learning of Nancy's death:

*"Having been working with the Aurora Colony Historical Society for over 25 years I have had the pleasure of meeting so many wonderful descendants of the Colony (1856-1883). They have shared stories about their families and I have gathered these into a working research archive along with our work with the actual colony archives. You know more about our families than we do, I have been told, and to some extent that is true. In this capacity I have seen many come and go until now I myself will soon be 66 years old.*

*"... You just felt better when Nancy came into the room. She had an appreciation for her Aurora Colony ancestors and their stories and she was able to speak about them with wisdom and humor. She had spent portions of her childhood in the building that now serves as the Ox Barn Museum, a site now visited by thousands of annual visitors.*

*"It was just our family,' Nancy liked to say. And yes, while true, it also was a part of a great American historical story, a group of people who attempted to live the Christian ideal in the heart of the great American West. They made beautiful furniture, quilts, baskets, and many other handcrafted items that were often lovingly preserved by their descendants who then, like Nancy, donated them to the museum.*

*"It's hard to accept that Nancy won't be coming to the museum again but I've also discovered that the colony spirits give a nod or two in our direction once in a while."*

Nancy married Stephen Woodyard in 1966. She spent 22 years as an Army wife, and then was office manager in Stephen's periodontal practice, retiring with him in 2015. Besides Stephen, she is survived by sons Jeffrey and Lance.



## GLADYS EPP PAULS THOMMEN

Feb. 8, 1930 - Dec. 22, 2019



Gladys Thommen, longtime museum volunteer and one-time ACHS president, died December 22, 2019, in Dallas, Oregon. She was 89. Gladys moved to Aurora with her first husband, Allen Epp, in 1972. The couple and their two children lived in the William Fry colony house on Main Street and Gladys worked at and chaired many ACHS events, including the Strawberry Social, the Sausage Dinner, and the Quilt Show. She also made Shaker lemon and Mennonite vanilla pies for a restaurant in town, and quilted for Mennonite relief groups.

When Patrick Harris showed up for work at the museum for his first shift as Executive Director in May 1983, Gladys handed him the keys and said, "I just started the tour for these folks. Now, it's your turn."

Patrick and Gladys drove to Amana, Iowa, in 1984 to attend the annual conference of the Communal Studies Association. Out of this meeting came the ACHS hosting of the 1991 national meeting in Aurora. Gladys organized several communal style dinners for

the conferees and she was generally recognized for her gracious nature and organizational skills. Her later marriages took her to Dallas, Oregon.

Gladys, you will be missed.

## SHIRLEY J. WILL

Feb. 2, 1929 —Dec. 9, 2019

Shirley J. Will, widow of Colony descendant Hal H. Will and a strong supporter of the Aurora Colony Historical Society, passed away December 9, 2019, at age 90. She was a lifelong resident of Seattle and worked in banking, retiring from Bank of America as Assistant Vice President. Shirley and Hal were married 57 years and enjoyed boating on Puget Sound and supporting historical groups including ACHS, the Northwest Steam Society, Puget Sound Historical Society, and Magnolia Historical Society. She had a passion for the arts and enjoyed painting, traveling, cooking, and gardening.



## FEBRUARY 10 BRUNCH KICKS OFF FARM & VILLAGE SEASON

**W**ould you like to share history with hundreds of lively, impressionable 4<sup>th</sup> graders? Come to the Old Aurora Colony Museum February 10 at 10 a.m. for an introduction to volunteering with the Stauffer-Will Farmstead Living History Program and the Aurora Colony Village Program. Come and meet fellow volunteers, new and veteran, and have some brunch. Try on a costume, if you wish. Bring a friend, and you'll be entered in a raffle! Please RSVP by emailing [christina@auroracolony.org](mailto:christina@auroracolony.org), or call the museum at: 503.678.5754 to add your name to the list!

The Farm and Village programs can only operate because of our great volunteers. Learn more at our volunteer Facebook page. Search in Facebook for **@StaufferWill Farm** and like the page to follow updates.



Aurora Colony Handspinners' Guild • 38<sup>th</sup> Annual  
**Antique Spinning Wheel Showcase**  
 March 14, 2020 • 10am-4pm  
 March 15, 2020 • Noon-4pm  
 Old Aurora Colony Museum  
 15018 2<sup>nd</sup> St NE, Aurora, OR 97002

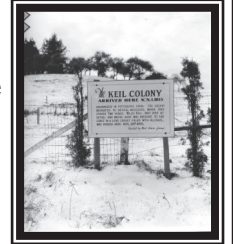
## 2020 QUILT SHOW ALREADY BRINGING 2020 VISIONS OF JOY

**A**t the conclusion of the 2019 Quilt Show, the Old Aurora Colony Quilters selected 20 winning blocks from all the entries in the block contest. They've been rearranged from the way they were posted on the wall during the show, and the quilters offset the blocks with dark grey borders surrounded by yellow. It's now becoming a striking quilt that will be raffled until our 2020 Quilt Show, 2020 Visions of Joy. Come see it at the museum as the quilting progresses. And thanks to our quilters, including Ethel Combs, pictured below.



## RECENT DONATIONS TO THE MUSEUM COLLECTION

**C**arol Dornfeld loaned two albums of photographs and papers for copying to our library. They document her Schlittler family connections to the Giesy family that settled near Willapa. While not directly members of the Colony, the Schlittlers shared extensive family relationships; Sarah Giesy Schlittler was a sister to Jacob "Big Jack" Giesy, Emma Wagner Giesy's second husband after Christian Giesy.



**J**an Giesy Brauer donated many photographs showing the various families who descended from John Giesy and Barbara White Giesy. John and Barbara had 11 children, Elizabeth Giesy being the eldest. She married George Kraus. Jan's collection takes in most of the other siblings and it includes many images that have not been found in public collections. Jan is the granddaughter of Alterius Giesy and Helen Griffith. Alterius was Elizabeth Kraus Giesy's brother.

**C**onnie and Lee Kearney donated a parlor chair from their Clara Will collection, while Elizabeth Southwell donated a flour sack from the Jacob Yost family. Thanks to all of you for enhancing our collection!

### GIFTS IN MEMORY

**In memory of  
 Carl & Hazel Snyder:**  
 Nancy Snyder & Jill Snyder

**In memory of  
 Charles & Christina  
 Schuele Snyder:**  
 Nancy Snyder

**In honor of  
 Nancy Woodyard:**  
 Diane Strong  
 Thomas & Cheryl Reddie  
 Shoun & Grace Ishikawa  
 Grace Goodrich

### NEW MEMBERS

Louise Jones, Canby  
 Deb Crieghton, Portland  
 Jason Shreve, Aurora

## SEEKING VOLUNTEERS!

- ◆ Farm & Village Program volunteers
- ◆ Repair, sewing, or cleaning of period clothing
- ◆ Fence fixers & trim repairers/painters
  - ◆ Weeding in the herb garden
- ◆ Building & grounds maintenance workers
  - ◆ Living history tour guides
  - ◆ Special event helpers

**Call Christina at 503.678.5754  
 if you can help!**



# Old Aurora —Colony—

PO Box 202, Aurora, OR 97002

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

## KEEP IN TOUCH with ACHS



@oldauroracolonymuseum  
@StaufferWillFarm

### On the web:

[www.auroracolony.org](http://www.auroracolony.org)

### 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

**Phone:** 503.678.5754 **Fax:** 503.678.5756



### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Guy Sperb, *President*  
Ken Hartley, *Vice President*  
Bill Bennett, *Treasurer*    Carol Burger, *Secretary*  
Luana Hill    Ted Heid

### STAFF

Patrick Harris, *Executive Director*  
Christina Leder, *Programs & Volunteer Liaison;*  
*Farm Program Manager*  
Caroline Queer, *Business Manager*  
Janus Childs, *Weekend Tour Guide*  
Kathy Hardman, *Farm Program Assistant*

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

We are a  **Blue Star Museum**  
arts.gov/bluestarmuseums

*Free admission for:*

- *Veterans with ID*
- *Active duty military & their families with ID*

**PLEASE REVIEW US ON**  **tripadvisor®**