

Gully Homestead Collection

Collection Summary

Title: Gully Homestead

Dates: 1862-2004

Location: Archives **BJ** 2, **BJ** 3; Archives **C** - drawer MD 7, tubes cabinet 3, and photos; Museum Library

Quantity: 3 boxes and 1 oversize drawer

Abstract: The Gully Homestead, a small house built near Mississippi Avenue and Chambers Road, is the oldest existing house in Aurora, Colorado. Though documents in the collection give conflicting dates as to the original construction, it was probably built during the 1870's and was occupied for many years by John Gully, an Irish immigrant, and his family. Interviews with Gully descendants, neighbors, and friends provide some of the information about the house, the farm, and the lives of the Gully family in early Aurora. Legal documents, genealogical charts, research papers, and correspondence give further details. In 1978, after Aurora acquired possession of the house, it was moved to Heritage Park; then in 1983 the house was moved to a larger property on Chambers Road, now called Delaney Farm, where it was restored.

Arrangement: Materials have been arranged in chronological order, beginning with historical documents about the Gully family and their home. Aurora's acquisition, relocation, and establishment of historic designation lead to plans for restoration. The largest part of the collection deals with restoration of the house at the Bresnahan property and preparation for opening it to the public as part of the city's Delaney Farm.

Contents

Series and Subseries

Box 1 of 3

Series I: Gully Family History

Subseries A: "A Sense of Place"

Folder 1: "The Gully-Delaney Site: A Sense of Place," is an 18-page document written before 1991. There are three complete photocopies and a partial rough draft. A general introduction describes the immigration of Irish families to America and living conditions here. Chapter One focuses on the Thomas Gully family, who had settled on a farm near West Tollgate Creek in Arapahoe County by 1879. John Gully's family is described in Chapter Two, which covers 1892-1915. Chapter Three, 1915 through the 1960's, covers Gully family financial difficulties and abandonment of the house. Chapters Four and Five describe the conditions of the house, acquisition by the city of Aurora, removal, and plans for restoration. A Gully family tree, footnotes, and a fact

sheet conclude the document.

Subseries B: Genealogy, Census, Cemetery

Folder 2: Several family trees, copies of 1880 and 1900 census records, notes on family and property, and burial records for Gully family members in Calvary and Fairmount cemeteries.

Subseries C: Information on Family Members

Folder 3: Biographies and photos of John Gully and John G. Kennedy copied from *Stone's History of Colorado* (1919). Many pages of notes from interviews with Gully family members, neighbors, and friends, particularly John O'Brien, grandson of John Gully. Photocopies of Thomas, Temperance, John, and Elizabeth Gully photos. Notes on Tollgate Creek homestead papers, school district meetings, county seat precinct candidates, photocopy of a financial diary (1877-1979), photocopies of a newspaper article on the death of John Gully, and notes on the Delaney family.

Series II: Gully Property History

Subseries A: Legal Documents

Folder 4: A typed three-page list of title search dates covers 1878 through 1964 and includes notes. 1879 and 1880 homestead documents (copies) are in the name of Thomas Gully. An 1881 document deeds property to Temperance Gully upon the death of Thomas. Other copies of deeds date from 1891 through 1982. A property appraisal document is dated 1874 (2 copies) . An 1896 note appointing John Gully as sales agent for his cattle and horses is signed by J. K. (?) Slattery.

Subseries B: Descriptions of Gully House, Maps

Folder 5: Several versions of an undated one-page document describe the Gully house, its history and significance. Added notes and corrections question the accuracy of some of the information about the house. Notes from 2003 and 2004 interviews with John O'Brien offer information about the house and the family routines. Correspondence, a photo and copies of photos of the house, a 1978 Denver Post article, and handwritten notes give further descriptions. Copies of several maps show Gully properties.

Subseries C: Gully Rodeo Association, Brands

Folder 6: Gully Rodeo Association deeds - 1953, 1954, and 1964 (photocopies). Two copies of Gully brand records are dated 1899 through 1978. Three copies of O'Brien brand records are dated 1916 through 1962.

Series III: Acquisition and Relocation

Subseries A: Gully House at Heritage Park

Folder 7: Correspondence, minutes and notes from 1975-1978 concern possible donation of the Gully pioneer home to the city of Aurora. Though relocation of the house was rejected by the Aurora Historical Commission in 1976, a memo from John F. Arney in 1978 states that the City Manager requested that a task force be established to select a site for relocation of the Gully homestead and other historic buildings.

Several versions of the “Gully Homestead Relocation Heritage Village Project,” handwritten notes, and task force minutes give a description of the house, possible sites for relocation, and sources of funding for the project.

Folder 8: Correspondence, memoranda, minutes, and notes, both original and copies, present ideas for the park site and acquisition of funds for the moving and restoration of the house. A copy of the document granting the house as a gift from Medema Homes to the Aurora Historical Society is dated April 28, 1978. An original memo from Dave McCord, senior planning commission planner, announces the resolution to create a Heritage Village at the park site near the judicial center.

Folder 9: Memos, agendas, notes, schedules, and budgets, both original and copies, outline plans for permits, construction of a foundation, method of securing restoration crews, and further plans for Heritage Park are dated June 1978.

Folder 10: Both original and copies of memos, correspondence and notes discuss the vision, administration and development of Heritage Park. An original letter from citizen Jack Dahlinger encourages Aurora to preserve the history of the area by restoring Gully Homestead. Other documents state the significance of the building and importance of both short and long term historic preservation.

Folder 11: Documents concerning liability insurance, a foundation permit request, plans for moving the house, preventing damage by vandalism and weather, and a building permit for the foundation are dated 1978. Documents dated 1979-1980 list projects to stabilize the house in its new location, plans for researching the Gully family, plans for restoration, and a letter from Virginia Steele requesting assistance with restoration plans. Memos list possible architects and preliminary estimates of restoration costs. Floor plan and elevation drawings with a list of structural, interior, and mechanical conditions are dated 1982.

Folder 12: Local newspaper articles, dated 1978 through 1982 and undated, follow the story of Aurora’s acquisition of the Gully Homestead and the relocation of the house at Heritage Park. Photos show the house in its original site, being moved to the new location, and details of its deteriorating condition. Articles include information about the Gully family, interesting items found in and under the home, and plans for restoration. Dates ranging from 1861-1886 are given for the original construction.

Subseries B: Graduate Research Projects

Folder 13: *Oxbow Park Study*, a Landscape Architecture master’s degree project by Elizabeth Rice, 1981, is a plan for creating an urban oasis along the Highline Canal near Aurora municipal buildings. The 15-acre site, Oxbow Park, is the current (1981) location of the Gully House.

Folder 14: Two Colorado State University students in the Historic Preservation program researched the historical background of the Gully homestead, working with and for the Aurora History Center. One purpose of their report was to provide information useful in the eventual restoration and interpretation of the Gully site. The report includes lists of sources researched, such as legal documents pertaining to house,

family burial locations, census records, tax schedules, and *Aurora Democrat* articles. Handwritten and typed notes, brochures on nineteenth century rural life, and photocopied death notices were also sources for the report.

Subseries C: Gully Stable

Folder 15: Correspondence 1979-1981 to and from Virginia Steele, museum coordinator, mentions removal of shed, gates, wood fencing, and small stable to Heritage Park. A contract for stable removal is dated July 1981.

Subseries D: Vandalism

Folder 16: Memos dated 1978 and 1982 discuss the city's liability for the Gully house now on city property and propose that a fence be installed to protect the property. Photos of the vandalized building are attached. Contract for fence and request for payment are dated June and August 1982.

Series IV: Historic Preservation

Subseries A: Aurora Historic Society

Folder 17: An undated original and copy of Aurora Historic Preservation Inventory covers the condition and architectural significance of the Gully house, a brief Gully family history, reasons for a preservation request, and interior and exterior photos of the house. 1982 Historical Society memos, a news release, letters, and meeting agendas outline plans for a petition drive to "interest Aurora residents in the history that surrounds them" and gain support for preservation of the Gully house. Historical Commission memos, meeting minutes, and notes on moving the house to the Bresnahan acreage (1982-84 and undated), are both original and copies.

Subseries B: State Historical Society of Colorado

Folder 18: Original Colorado cultural resource survey forms, copy of a state inventory form, 1978 original application for historic preservation, 1979 and 1983 copies of plans for preservation and funding, instructions and application form for grant. Original 1986 letter announces National Register of Historic Places designation for Gully Homestead.

Series V: Restoration Funding and Expenditures

Subseries A: Donations

Folder 19: A four-page typed list of donors with contact information, amount of donation, and hand written notes is probably from 1978. Originals and copies of letters and memos from donors such as banks, Medema Homes, and Heritage Financial Corporation are also from 1978. An original statement and copy outlines plans for further specific financial requests after the house is moved. Other lists of donors, amounts, and planned use of donation are not dated.

Subseries B: Capital Proposals

Folder 20: Handwritten notes, minutes, memos, and correspondence list detailed cost estimates for moving and restoring the Gully house. Most are from Virginia Steele. An Aurora capital improvements budget for 1981 includes cost estimates and types of restoration work planned for the Gully house.

Folder 21: Copies of 1982, 1983, and 1984 capital facilities plans describe justification for funding of Gully property restoration and stabilization. Original memos and copies from Virginia Steele support expenditures for Gully house improvements.

Subseries C: Expenditures

Folder 22: Copies of contract proposals, purchase requisitions, and receipts for restoration work on the Gully house, memos about costs of renovation projects, and requests for payment are dated 1979-1982.

Series VI: Gully House at Bresnahan Property

Subseries A: Description of Property

Folder 23: The development of the Bresnahan site, possible legal problems, the burning of a building on the site, the posting of signs, flood insurance, other uses for the land, and soils condition report are mentioned in memos, meeting minutes, a Denver Post article, and correspondence. A 1984 memorandum from Virginia Steele details updates to the 1982 master plan proposal including parking lot, fire lane, and zoning changes. A 1984 conceptual master plan is attached to memos requesting its adoption. A map and aerial photos show location of Bresnahan site. Notes from a telephone interview with Charles Bresnahan describe the ranch and its buildings; attached is a map with notes.

Subseries B: Rezoning

Folder 24: Memos question Tollgate Village PCZD's designation as a park. April 1982 memo announces city ownership of the 137-acre tract. Rough and final drafts of Aurora's application for rezoning of Bresnahan property. Original and copies of 1983 memos from Virginia Steele on plat preparation and lawsuit.

Subseries C: Interpretive Plan

Folder 25: "Interpretive Plan for Gully Homestead," a twenty-six-page research document by Susan Swiatosz in 1982, presents the Gully family and home as representative of the cultural and environmental history of Aurora at the turn of the 20th century. The author proposes using the Gully house as part of an educational outdoor center at the Bresnahan site, with demonstrations, social events, and tours to enlighten the public about life on the Eastern plains a century ago. There are two copies of the report and an additional copy of the significance statement. Undated pages on Gully house research list sources of information.

Subseries D: Newspaper Clippings

Folder 26: Articles and photos from *The Denver Post*, *Rocky Mountain News*, *Aurora Sentinel*, and other publications show the move of the Gully house from Heritage Park to the Bresnahan property near the northeast corner of Chambers Road and Alameda Avenue. Clippings date from 1983 to 1997.

Series VII: Selection of Architect

Folder 27: Documents from The American Institute of Architects describe responsibilities and services of an owner-architect agreement.

Folder 28: Correspondence, memos and notes to and from Virginia Steele and others concern selection of an architect for the Gully renovation and an outline of proposed renovations. Plans and elevations drawings of the house are included.

Series VIII: SLP Restoration Plans

Subseries A: Preservation /Maintenance Guide (copy 1)

Folder 29: (Binder #1) *The J. Gully Homestead Historic Structure Preservation/Maintenance Guide #83/192* contains detailed plans for the City of Aurora's history center at the newly acquired Bresnahan property. It includes such areas as historic significance, maintenance, safety, inspections, preservation, legal records, soils reports, construction plans, paint analysis, and photographs. 1983 and 1984

Box 2 of 3

Series VIII: SLP Restoration Plans (continued from Box 1)

Subseries A: Preservation/Maintenance Guide (copies 2 and 3)

Folder 1: (Binder #2) *The J. Gully Homestead Historic Structure Preservation/Maintenance Guide #83/192* contains detailed plans for the City of Aurora's history center at the newly acquired Bresnahan property. It includes such areas as historic significance, maintenance, safety, inspections, preservation, legal records, soils reports, construction plans, paint analysis, and photographs. 1983 and 1983

Folder 2: (Binder #3) *The J. Gully Homestead Historic Structure Preservation/Maintenance Guide #83/192* contains detailed plans for the City of Aurora's history center at the newly acquired Bresnahan property. It includes such areas as historic significance, maintenance, safety, inspections, preservation, legal records, soils reports, construction plans, paint analysis, and photographs. 1983 and 1984

Folder 3: Paint analysis for Gully Homestead restoration, a duplicate of SLP Binder Appendix F, 1984.

Subseries B: Schedules and Procedures

Folder 4: Documents on the SLP proposed scope of preservation work, correspondence and memos on contracts, and copies of the project schedule with procedure details are part of the initial plans for restoration and are dated March through July 1983. There are detailed proposals for moving the house as well as other notes, minutes and memos about the move.

Note: A layout and grading plan may be found in **Archives C, Drawer MD-7**.

Folder 5: Further plans for moving and restoring the house and stable are dated August through December 1983. These documents include conditions of the contract with SLP, detailed lists and descriptions of proposed work on all aspects of the reconstruction, and elevation and floor plan drawings. A September 1984 set of construction plans includes materials, grading, layout, details, many photos, and schedules. Larger copies are in **Archives C, Drawer MD-7**. An addendum to the construction guide, memos, and a

maintenance manual draft are dated September through December 1984.

Folder 6: SLP notes, memos, and lists of specific details for reconstruction are dated 1985-1986. An August 1985 SLP Project Manual Index includes plans for grading, paving, landscaping, irrigation, plantings, and fencing. Detailed drawings illustrate some areas. Documents cover 1984-1986.

Series IX: Restoration

Subseries A: Little Curry Crew – Contract Documents

Folder 7: Spiral-bound book of documents for the J. Gully Homestead Restoration is dated October 24, 1983, and includes contracts between the City of Aurora and SLP, insurance, bidding instructions, and a detailed summary of work to be completed.

Folder 8: Observations Reports from SLP to Aurora include details of restoration progress and photos. The reports date from November 1983 through March 1984 and were distributed to Virginia Steele, Barry McCarron, project coordinator, and other Aurora representatives.

Box 3 of 3

Series IX: Restoration (Continued from Box 2)

Subseries B: Paint Samples

Folder (Box) 1: A box of seventy-five envelopes of paint samples taken from the Gully house to be used in analysis of the original paint in the house. Envelopes are dated August through October 1983; the box is dated January 1984.

Subseries C: Site Development

Folder 2: Electrical and sewer lines. Memos from September 1983 through May 1985 discuss electrical and sewer installation and include site plans and a contract with Public Service Company of Colorado for an underground cable. A City of Aurora booklet of bidding contract documents is dated May 1985.

Folder 3: Fire Lane. 1983 grading plan by SLP and 1985 documents concerning the creation of a fire lane and fence at the Gully Homestead. A City of Aurora booklet of bidding contract documents is dated May 1985.

Folder 4: Landscaping and property clean up. Correspondence and memos from 1983-1984, most from Virginia Steele, concern removal of old fence and Gully house foundation behind the library, and removal of the milk house on Bresnahan property. Other memos, 1985-1986, discuss SLP fees for landscape services, Bresnahan Task Force topics, and maintenance problems.

Subseries D: House Improvements

Folder 5: Notes from 1983 and 1984 correspondence from SLP concern details of restoration. A set of documents from The Little Curry Crew dated May 1984 include details of improvements such as waterproofing, baseboard heaters, exterior caulk, and lexan

exterior glazing. W.O.O.D. architectural award entry form and announcement of Gully Homestead as finalist in interior remodeling/restoration are from 1984. Little Curry Crew building inspection sign (1983-1984) and details on paint are from 1983 and undated.

Series X: Expenditures

Folder 6: Associated Construction Consultants' estimated costs of detailed renovation by SLP is dated September 1983; funding requests for renovation, signed by Virginia Steele and Kenneth Reiff, are dated 1982-1983. Professional services agreement between city of Aurora and SLP, 1983, includes insurance, services to be provided, payment schedule, and other conditions. Requests for payment, change order forms, and correspondence are also dated 1983.

Folder 7: Requests for payment, payment authorizations, lists of city expenditures, memos and notes on sewer and fire lane costs, and on budgets are dated 1984-1987.

Series XI: Security

Folder 8: A list of emergency contacts is undated. A 1985 letter from the Aurora Police Dept. to Virginia Steele recommends changes in lighting, security of doors and windows, and the addition of an alarm system to prevent crime at the Gully house; a booklet on preventing burglary and robbery loss is included. Also included are a building fire inspection report and memos.

Series XII: Publicity

Folder 9: Newspaper articles and a W.O.O.D., Inc., mailing mention the use of wood in the Gully restoration and SLP as a finalist in the 1984 award for designs in wood. An Aurora Planning and Zoning Commission newsletter, July 1987, features the DeLaney Farm and Gully Homestead. An invitation to the grand opening, July 31, 1987. A card and stationary show a drawing of the Gully house.

Series XIII: Guest Book

Folder 10: Spiral-bound guest book dated August 1987-1990 lists names and addresses of visitors to the Gully house.

Series XIV: Interpretive Furnishings Plan

Folder 11: Compiled by Nan Rickey in May 1998, an Interpretive Furnishing Plan for the Gully house includes a floor plan with placement of items selected from catalogs dated 1900 and earlier. Copies of catalog pages and a list of suggested items are grouped by porch, parlor, chamber, and kitchen.

Series XV: Artifacts from Gully House

Subseries A: List of Items

Folder 12: Two undated copies list clothing, shoes, household, and other items removed from

the house. These items are stored in the History Museum collection storage room. Notes on what samples of flooring, wiring, and other architectural scraps should be saved are undated.

Subseries B: SLP Architects Finds

Folder 13: A numbered list of items found by SLP in the Gully house, and floor plan marked with the location of each item, is dated May 9, 1983. An envelope of items gathered is included.

Subseries C: Documents Found

Folder 14: School related items such as financial reports, school district bond election notice, and an envelope from superintendent of schools and dated 1877-1927.

Folder 15: Legal documents such as a deed, summonses, a complaint and parts of other copies of documents are dated 1887-1950.

Folder 16: Receipts of various kinds are dated 1909-1952.

Folder 17: Mortgages, loans, and checks date from the 1880's through 1944.

Folder 18: Handwritten and typed correspondence, some with envelopes, is dated 1903-1925.

Folder 19: Paper rodeo posters date from the 1920's to the 1950's.

Folder 20: Newspaper clippings, a booklet on polo, and miscellaneous printed and handwritten items date from 1901-1950.

Folder 21: Books and music – Undated pages from children's story and song books, a portion of *Wehman's Selection of Popular Recitations*, and a book of horses for sale at a Mexico, Missouri, county fair.

Folder 22: Greeting cards and announcements from 1900-1952 and undated.

Folder 23: Religious cards, letters, and booklets are undated.

Folder 24: Seasonal post cards from 1910-1918 and undated.

Folder 25: Miscellaneous post cards from 1908-1947 and undated.

Oversize Documents (Archives C, MD 7)

Series XVI

Subseries A: Gully Family and Property

Folder 1: Five maps of Aurora highlight properties listed in Thomas Gully's diary and account books, 1881-1899. Homestead certificate for John Gully, 1887, and Certificate of Naturalization for John Delaney, 1880, are in a folder. Hand-drawn and colored map of Mrs. Mary McLane's property along Toll Gate Creek is dated 1904; the name Alice Delaney Crowley, great-granddaughter of Thomas Gully, is written on the back. A seven-generation family tree of Thomas and Temperance Gully descendants is undated.

A 1946 Denver Post photo shows a rodeo at Gully Ranch. A colored pencil drawing of the Gully Homestead by Bill Bruneau is dated 1978.

Subseries B: Topographic Maps

Folder 2: 1965 US Department of the Interior Geological Survey map of Fitzsimmons Quadrangle is revised in 1971 (Aurora History Center 31, 34). A second Geological Survey map, from 1976, shows historic trails of the greater Denver Area. It is by Glenn R. Scott and is numbered 79-12.14 B.

Subseries C: Construction Documents – SLP

Folder 3: Two sets of twelve-page architectural plans for the Gully Homestead include grading, floor plans, sections, exterior elevations, photos, details, electrical plans, and foundation drawings, as well as schedules. The set of “As Done Plans,” dated 5/9/84, was approved by Aurora on 10/31/83. One additional page 3, Layout and Grading, contains added details.

Folder 4: Three sets of reduced-size copies of the Folder 3 SLP architectural plans for Gully.

Subseries D: Architect Drawings – City of Aurora

Folder 5: Two sets of two-page site and landscape drawings are from Gully Homestead Planned Building Group, dated 1983; there is an additional landscape plan. A one-page sanitary sewer plan dated 1985 is from the City of Aurora Engineering Division. A 1995 drawing of foundation, floor plan, and details is from Bierbach Consulting Engineers for Aurora History Center.

Additional Gully items in other collections

Archives AI 1

“O’Brien, John and Jim about their grandfather, 3-10-78” - audio cassette Box Me-Sa

“O’Brien, John J., 2-18-04” - audio cassette Box Me-Sa

Archives C

MD 8 – Maps, photo, certificate, drawings, posters

339 photos

Tubes A (1-4) and B (3) - Architect plans, elevations, details, and project schedule

Books in Aurora History Museum Library:

The Gully-Delaney Site: A Sense of Place, Hunt, Rebecca A., Oct. 3, 1986 (MUS 929.2 Hun)

Acc. # - 3 1277 00877 3217 (This binder contains the same Box 1, Series I, document, “A Sense of Place,” with the addition of drawings and a script for room exhibits.)