



## Elementary Classroom Primary Source Set

### Economics and the Trolley in Aurora



Grade Level:  
Elementary- 3<sup>rd</sup>

#### Essential Question:

How does transportation support and influence the flow of goods and services in an economy?

#### Supporting Questions:

1. How do disruptions or changes to transportation affect an economy?
2. Why was the trolley an important connection between Aurora and Denver?
3. What kinds of transportation are important, both historically and today, in rural and urban areas?

#### Sources:

Full size classroom resources can be found [here](#)



*Max Maul Sugar Beet Harvest. The ground appears to be dried mud, with a few sugar beets on the ground.*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections



*Max Maul and children during potato harvest.*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections



*Hoffman Heights Shopping Center, Aurora, Colorado, 1967.*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections



*Colfax Avenue and Dallas Street, Aurora, Colorado, 1921.*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections



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*Shopping center on Colfax Avenue.*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections



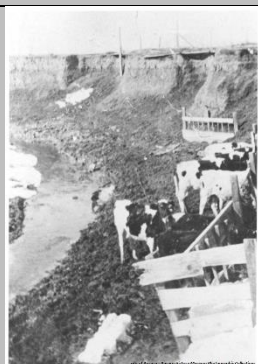
*Colfax Avenue, 1970's*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections, P1997.014.021



*Colfax Avenue, 1970's*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections, P1993.7781



*Hoery Farm Plow*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections, P1990.8332



*Hoery Farm Dairy Cows*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections, P1990.857



*Hoery Farm Turkeys*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections, P1990.831



*Hoery Farm, Dairy Delivery Truck.*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections, P1990 823.2



*Colfax Avenue line in Aurora, Colfax Ave. Electric Railway*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Photographic Collections



*"The Tramway Bulletin" February 1917*  
city of Aurora - Aurora History Museum Collections

### Background Knowledge:

Many major cities implemented public transit systems in the late 19th century. As the population grew, new communities like Fletcher (the original name for Aurora) created streetcar lines to link its citizens to Denver. Denver experimented with horse-drawn and cable cars, as well as a locally invented street-level electric conduit system, before settling on an overhead electric trolley system in the early 1890s. Fletcher developers purchased the struggling Colfax Electric Railway in 1891 and expanded the line eastward. Completed by 1893, the trolley line terminated at Dallas Street, but extended to the Gutheil Park subdivision near present day Ursula Street within five years.

Low ridership forced the Colfax Electric Railway to sell in 1898 to the Denver Tramway Company (DTC). DTC cut service east of Geneva Street that same year. By the early 1900s, the frequency of trolley traffic into Aurora increased again. In the 1930s service was cut again. The Aurora trolleys moved to other lines by 1932 and some were given new life on the Denver & Inter-Mountain Railroad to Golden, but they went out of service by 1940.

[Aurora Museum Trolley Video](#)

[Trolley history link](#) Scroll to bottom to find orange "trolley history" icon



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#### Building Background Knowledge for the Student:

Students will be introduced to the concept of economic sectors in this lesson, so they should understand that there are differences in the different ways that goods are produced and consumed.

- The primary sector deals with raw materials, like mining coal, oil, natural gas, etc, but also includes the production of food and mining metals that will be turned into something later.
- The secondary sector is involved in the changing of primary goods, such as turning iron into steel or processing food into something ready made for the shelves of a grocery store.
  - In both the primary and secondary sectors of the economy, a physical good is produced.
- The tertiary sector is the service sector, anyone who provides a service, like a doctor, teacher or salesperson is involved in the tertiary sector of the economy.

#### Strategy Instruction:

*Contextualization* asks students to locate a document in time and place and to understand how these factors shape its content. When contextualizing a document, students should ask:

When and where was this document created?

What was the same then?

What was different?

How might the circumstances under which the document was created affect its content?

*Picture Sort:* students will sort their pictures into different groups of their own choosing, starting with the cartoon style pictures and working up to the primary source photos. Students should keep sorting and trying to find new categories and ways to sort the pictures and talk to their groups about their ideas.

#### Strategy Instruction Differentiation:

Students will work in groups for the picture sort. The suggested assessment can be done informally as a whole class instead of as a written activity.

#### Discussion:

To get students thinking about transportation and economics, have them think of all the places they go in a day or week and all the things they get out of those trips (like going to school, their parents go to work, running errands, buying food etc.)

How do they get places?

Do they use any transportation that isn't provided by their parents?

What sort of goods and services do they get by travelling to different places?

What kind of transportation does their family use?

#### Assessment:

Using the trolley photos and what they learned from the picture sort, students will be able to answer two questions about transportation and the relationship between Denver and Aurora.



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#### Colorado Academic Standards- Social Studies:

- CO Standard 1-History
  - 3.1.2.a- Compare past and present situations and events
  - 3.1.2.b- Give examples of people, events, and developments that brought important changes to a community or region
- CO Standard 3-Economics
  - 3.3.1.a-Describe the difference between producers and consumers and explain how they need each other
  - 3.3.1.c-Describe how the exchange of goods and services between businesses and consumers affects all parties

#### Colorado Academic Standards- Reading, Writing, and Communicating:

- CO Standard 1-Oral Expression and Listening
  - 3.1.1.a-Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly

#### Sample Activities:

Start with a picture sort using the cartoon/clip art pictures (at the end of the lesson plan). Students sort the images based on whatever they want to do. Some examples might be goods vs services, producers and consumers, or something else entirely that students can come up with, the goal being for students to discover through their sorting that there are different sectors in the economy and different people produce and consume each of them. Students may need to sort a few times to come up with categories that they like and think are the best fit for the pictures. Students should work in pairs or small groups on this activity.

Students will share and articulate the categories that they chose and which pictures they put where. It could just be presenting it to another group, or at an all class sharing where each group has to share what they chose as their categories and some examples of what goes in each. A piece of chart paper could be a good visual way for students to organize their categories and then present them.

After students have completed their first sort, have them sort the historic photos and see if they can fit them into the same categories.



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#### Economic History Lesson Assessment

**Question 1.** The Colfax Trolley linked Denver and Aurora and gave people a way to travel back and forth between the two cities. Why was it important for people to move between Aurora and Denver?

**Question 2.** The Aurora trolley route was completed in 1893 and stopped running in 1932. Why do you think the trolley route went out of service? Did people stop traveling between Denver and Aurora, or do you think there was another reason?





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#### Economics History Lesson: Assessment Rubric

Level	Description
Proficient	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The student identifies that Denver was the center of business and people would need to travel there in order to work. Also, Aurora was fairly rural with lots of farms, so people needed to travel to find work or provisions.</li><li>2) The student recognizes that transportation would have shifted toward automobiles. They may reference the Colfax photos that show lots of car traffic. The student may also recognize that Aurora and Colfax became their own economic center so there was less need for a daily trolley to Denver because some of those people could find jobs and goods in Aurora. There is no real right answer. Check to see if the student recognizes the time difference between the years the trolley ran and later years, and makes an educated guess as to the decline of the trolley.</li></ol>
Emergent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The student identifies that people would need to travel between Denver and Aurora, but does not articulate that the need for travel arises because Denver is the business center and Aurora is fairly rural during the time period of the photos.</li><li>2) The student starts to make an educated guess about why the trolley service ended, but does not use any evidence from the lesson or their own experience to support their statement.</li></ol>
Basic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) The student does not identify any reasons why people would need to move between Denver and Aurora.</li><li>2) The student does not attempt to explain the reasons that the trolley would have stopped running.</li></ol>

