



Benefits of Membership

All members receive the following benefits:

- Free admission to museum tours, experience the museum you are supporting.
- Admission to an event of your choice
Antique Spinning Wheel Showcase
Strawberry Social
Quilt Show
- Newsletters and advance notice of all events
- Invitation to a “Members Only” curator’s tour of new exhibits
- 10% Discount at the museum store
- Discounts on classes
- Voting privileges at the annual meeting

“Willie Keil Society” members will receive two guest passes to share with friends

“Colony Society” members will receive four guest passes to share with friends

“Aurora Society” members will receive eight guest passes to share with friends

Are you interested in a higher level of giving, specific program donation or endowment giving? Please contact us or visit our website for more giving opportunities and information.

Aurora Colony Historical Society

P.O. Box 202, Aurora, Oregon 97002

Telephone: (503) 678-5754

Fax: (503) 678-5756

Email: info@auroracolony.org

Website: www.auroracolony.org



Old Aurora Colony Museum

Schedule

February 1 through December 31

Hours

11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday

Noon to 4 p.m., Sunday

Closed Monday, Holidays

Tours

Call ahead for Guided Tours or to schedule school field trips.

Second and Liberty Streets, Aurora, Oregon

(one block east of Hwy. 99E)

Our Mission

The Aurora Colony Historical Society promotes interactive lifelong learning by inspiring curiosity about the heritage of the Aurora Colony (1856-1883).



Oregon’s First Communal Society (1856-1883)

Discover the story of the Aurora Colony, a promised “Eden” at the end of the Oregon Trail.

Founded in 1856 by the dynamic Dr. William Keil and named for his eight year old daughter, Aurora Mills was Oregon’s first and most successful Christian communal society lasting until 1883.

The Old Aurora Colony Museum Ox Barn 1862



Hundreds of industrious and resourceful Germans, who had crossed the Oregon Trail as a group, built a distinct and unique village relying on their craftsmanship and commitment to community. The Colonists, as they were called by others, literally shared labor and property in a model they adopted from Acts 2:44 in the New Testament yet also interacted with other Oregonians through business, music, and most personally through the meals they prepared and served at their famous hotel.

The Old Aurora Colony Museum Ox Barn 1862

Permanent museum exhibits, utilizing original artifacts, include the Aurora Brass Band, the Colony Church, Dr. Giesy's Drugstore, the Pioneer Hotel and the school.

Featured and changing exhibits highlight the role of specific families within the communal experience.



Summer Kitchen 1877



Unique in Oregon was the Aurora Colony custom of building separate wash houses—the counterpart of today's utility room. Often these buildings were shared by a number of families and the women would work together

at such tasks as making soap or stuffing sausage. Visitors to the Museum complex will see this "out-kitchen" where women's work was done—boiling clothes, preserving food, and the many other chores that were a part of pioneer day life.

Steinbach Cabin 1876



The log cabin home built by George and Catherine Steinbach in 1876 and presented to the museum complex by their grandson and wife, Ernest and Marian Becke, is a rare and authentic example of Aurora Colony building ability. It is constructed of peeled and hand-hewn timbers and chinked with mud.

This three-room cabin was once a comfortable home for a family of eight. Most of the present furnishings such as tables, chairs, dishes, a spinning wheel, a spool bed, a handwoven table cloth, a colorful pieced quilt, etc., have been supplied by Mr. and Mrs. Becke from their store of Colony treasures.

The Village Shops

The Aurora Colony supported its communal operations through the sale of a wide variety of farm and agricultural products that were grown and often processed on the farm sites that surrounded the village.

In the village shops, however, skilled craftsmen and women manufactured furniture, wove baskets, made shoes and all varieties of textiles. Tinsmiths and blacksmiths worked closely with wheelwrights and carpenters to build and repair wagons while also producing necessary articles for the houses, the stores, the hotel and the other shops.

Kraus House 1864



This family home was presented to the Historical Society by John Kraus, the son of an original Colony settler, and his two sons, John Jr. and George. With the official dissolution of the Aurora Colony in 1879, George and Elizabeth Kraus became the official owners of this house. George was a shoemaker, or cobbler and Elizabeth was the head of the tailor shop. This charming pioneer home is now completely furnished much as it has been over the years, with Aurora hand made furniture and many other items which made Colony life pleasant and worthwhile.

Herb Garden

William Keil was an herb doctor. He had no formal medical training but was skilled in the use of medicinal plants that cured sickness. The herb garden is similar to the one that was at the Aurora during colony times. The herbs in the garden are the same kinds as were planted in the Old Economy Pennsylvania garden where many of the colonies' German settlers originated.

Emma Wakefield, prominent Oregon herbalist and resident of Canby, Oregon, received recognition for her long-time interest and knowledge of herbs in the planting of the herb garden at the Old Aurora Colony Museum.

Become A Member

Join Us !

Preserve our history and support our mission of promoting interactive lifelong learning by inspiring curiosity about the heritage of the Aurora Colony (1856-1883).

Membership Levels

<input type="checkbox"/> Senior / Student	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual + one	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$40.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational Supporter	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Willie Keil Society	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Colony Society	\$250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Aurora Society	\$500.00

- New Membership Renewal Membership
 Gift Membership
 I am a Colony Descendent

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please make check payable to
 "Aurora Colony Historical Society" and mail to:
 P.O. Box 202 Aurora, OR 97002
 Or visit our website and JOIN online.