NEXT MEETING:
Sunday, May 3, 2015
1:30 to 4:00 PM
Melvin Schoolhouse
4950 S. Laredo St., Aurora 80015

Amy Gibson presents
THE HIVE LIVES ON:
How Quilts Still Bring Us Together

Amy Gibson is a professional quilter who will discuss the quilting bees that brought America’s rural communities together 150 years ago and how this concept continues to thrive in today’s quilting community (particularly as part of the modern quilting movement). She will illustrate this with numerous quilts, including a selection of pieces from her new book For Keeps: Meaningful Patchwork for Everyday Living.

Ms. Gibson is a passionate writer, quilt designer, blogger, and quilting instructor. An insatiable crafter since birth, she learned to sew as a young girl in 4H and has been addicted to patchwork (or, as she calls it, “coloring with fabric”) ever since. Amy’s work can be seen in the Denver Art Museum, McCall’s Quilting, the Australian Quilter’s Companion, and American Patchwork & Quilting. She was nominated for the 2014 Instructor of the Year by the International Association of Creative Arts Professionals. She enjoys teaching others to quilt in the classroom and on-line and is a seasoned instructor for the popular learning site Craftsy.com. The mother of four young children, Amy attributes her ability to do all this to “an incredibly supportive husband, faith, and good coffee.” You can follow along with her adventures in sewing and motherhood on her blog www.stitcherydickorydock.com.

Please note that this meeting will be held at the Melvin Schoolhouse, located next to Smoky Hill High School.
LAST MEETING’S ELECTIONS
At our annual meeting in January, the members present re-elected Garry O’Hara as president of CCVHS and they elected Peter Faris as vice-president and Will Sear as assistant secretary-treasurer. Congratulations to Garry, Peter, and Will. These terms are for two years.

PREVIOUS PROGRAM
At our last meeting, held at the Aurora History Museum, Executive Director Jennifer Kuehner gave us an outstanding presentation on the history of trolleys in this region. Afterward she led us to the new Ruth Fountain Gallery in the museum, where we boarded Trolley Trailer No. 610 and marveled at the work that went into refurbishing this piece of our history. The local use of streetcars goes back to 1867 when the Denver Horse Railroad Company was granted a charter to build a horse-drawn mass transportation system in the city. Renamed the Denver City Railway Company, by 1874 this system operated in north Denver and along Broadway, Park Avenue, Larimer Street, and Champa Street.

The Denver Electric & Cable Company was formed in 1885, although electrically powered transportation was still in the experimental stages. Dr. Sidney Short of the University of Denver and his partner John W. Nesmith experimented with several designs until they settled on the “conduit” system. In this system an underground conduit supplied the electricity that was picked up by each streetcar through slots in the pavement. This system was unreliable in wet weather, however, and many people complained of electric shock when they touched an outer rail and the center slot at the same time. The concept of electrically powered streetcars was abandoned for a while, and most transportation companies again turned to horse-drawn conveyances and cable cars. By 1890 Denver had one of the best cable car systems of any city its size.

The first successful electric streetcar was developed in Richmond, Virginia, in 1888. This system employed overhead wires that supplied electricity to each car by means of a pole connected to a wheel that traveled along the roof of the vehicle. The pole-and-wheel assembly was called a “trolley,” and streetcars that used the system came to be called “trolleys.”

The Woeber (pronounced “Webber”) brothers settled in Denver in 1867 and became famous for making the finest carriages in the west. They eventually started making streetcars, and their method of using woods that were seasoned in Colorado’s dry air ensured that Woeber cars were of better quality than any that could be obtained back east. From 1898 to 1913 the Woeber Company built all the trolley cars for the Denver Tramway Company, which was formed in 1886 and became the largest public transportation company in the area.

In 1886 the Colfax Avenue Railway was formed to provide streetcar service along Colfax Avenue from the eastern border of Denver (then York Street) to the new community of Montclair (at Quebec Street), in
what is now Aurora. After starting out with trailers pulled by steam-powered locomotives, this company switched to trolley cars and changed its name to the Colfax Avenue Electric Railway. This company was bought by the Denver Tramway Company in 1898.

The last Woeber trolley cars and trailers were built in 1913-1914 and delivered to the Denver Tramway Company. Included in this series were the 26 trolley trailers numbered 594 to 619 (No. 610 of which now resides in the Aurora History Museum). These trailers were longer than previous ones, had more advanced coupling to the motorized cars, and were painted bright red and yellow.

In 1936 No. 610 and several other trailers in the 600 series were converted to standard gauge wheels and assigned to Denver Tramway’s line to Golden. They were used to transport workers of the Depression-era Works Progress Administration on their way to constructing Red Rocks Amphitheatre. This was the last time these trolley trailers were used to transport people; most were put in storage. In 1950 Dr. Edwin Perrott bought three of them for $50 each, and one of them ended up in his farmhouse and was later restored. (Does anyone know what happened to the other two trailers that Dr. Perrott bought?)

When Fitzsimons Army Hospital opened after World War I, the Fitzsimons Bus & Taxi Service was formed by Aurora residents A.G. “Pop” Stitt and L.C. Connor. This was one of the first bus (“omnibus”) lines in the region, and it eventually extended to downtown Denver. As more bus routes were established, and as more people drove their own automobiles, trolley cars were slowly taken out of service. Trolleys continued to operate along Colfax until 1932, when service to Aurora was replaced with buses. Buses replaced all trolleys in the Denver area by 1950.

We thank you, Jennifer, for a great presentation and tour. We also thank you for the use of your slide-show script in writing this Quill article.

**TROLLEY TRAILER No. 610**

The restoration of Trolley Trailer No. 610 began in early 2006 when an Aurora police officer responded to a trespassing and vandalism complaint at a farmhouse near the corner of Colfax and Airport Road. The farmhouse belonged to William Perrott and was originally built by his father, Dr. Edwin Perrott. When he entered the house, the police officer was amazed to find that Dr. Parrott had built the house around an old streetcar. Since he wanted to demolish the house anyway, Mr. Perrott said he would consider donating the virtually intact trolley car to the local museum if it could be removed from the house. The officer reported this to his supervisor who notified the museum, and this led to the recovery and restoration process of the old trolley trailer and the journey to its final home at the Aurora History Museum.

The Woeber Car Company built Trolley Trailer No. 610 in 1913. Pulled behind a motorized trolley, it was operated by the Denver Tramway Company from about 1914 to 1932. The trailer could hold about 50 seated passengers; in rush-hour conditions it could accommodate up to 50 more standing commuters. (Imagine that many people crammed into a vehicle that was only 40 feet long by 8.5 feet wide!) When Denver Tramway ended its use of trolleys in 1950, Dr. Edwin Parrott bought No. 610 for $50 and had it moved to his farmhouse. He converted it into his bedroom and office and here it stayed for 56 years, somewhat protected but deteriorating over time.

In July 2006 the vehicle was carefully taken out of the farmhouse and eventually moved to a warehouse just north of Buckley Air Force Base. Here a restoration effort of over four years brought the trolley trailer to its original appearance. Under the guidance of the Aurora Museum Foundation and funding from the community, sixteen dedicated volunteers spent over 4300 hours working on the restoration. This effort was headed by the late Bob Eide, director of the Foundation and CCVHS member. The work of Gary
Wolf and Bob’s wife Ruth Fountain, both CCVHS members, were a large part of this painstaking volunteer project. In 2009 Ruth told the Aurora Sentinel, “There is so little on the history of Aurora. Bob researched so many things when he was writing for the Aurora Museum Foundation. We were always just appalled at how little information is available. He just felt that this is a very important part of the city, particularly with the advent of light rail. He just felt it was very much a part of the history of Aurora.”(Unfortunately Bob Eide died before he could see the end result. Ruth said, “This is the culmination of our labor. He would have loved it.”)

The restoration team devised innovative materials and techniques to clean the hundred-year-old wood and remove old paint, bringing to light interior signs such as “No Spitting.” A museum fact sheet states, “The entire trolley trailer was taken apart, paint and varnish removed, components evaluated, new components made, and the trailer was put back together.” (Hundreds of visible screws were cleaned and polished by hand. Said Ruth, “I’ve polished more screws that you can believe.”)

After restoration, the biggest problem was where to put the historic vehicle. It was decided that it could not reside outside, where it would be at the mercy of the elements and vandals. In 2010 the Aurora History Museum developed a plan to build a new addition for the trolley trailer on the east side of the museum, and this was followed by a campaign to raise funds for the design and construction of the addition. But when it seemed that the needed money would never be raised, in stepped the Aurora City Council: In October 2012 the Council approved $1.46 million for the museum’s expansion (to which has been added over $175,000 in cash and in-kind donations). At the same time the City Council resolved that the new wing would be named in honor of Ruth Fountain for her half-century of service to the City of Aurora (to Ruth’s complete surprise!).

The Sentinel in 2014 quoted Ruth Fountain, “This is a day that lots of us have waited for and worked hard toward, and I’m very humbled. I think I’m getting way too much credit, the cadre of volunteers should really be getting this award as well.”

According to a 2010 Sentinel article, Aurora History Museum director Jennifer Kuehner said of the trolley, “It’s a landmark in the city. It has a very direct correlation to the growth of Aurora. Suburban growth, the transportation industry and our relationship with the larger metro area – all of these issues can be interpreted through this one object.” And last year the Sentinel quoted Ms. Kuehner, “The trolley is what linked us to [the] metro area. I don’t know whether Fletcher [Aurora’s original name] would have grown as much as it did if citizens didn’t have a way to travel to jobs in Denver… We’re one of the only museums that have a fully restored trolley trailer.”

At the museum the trolley trailer is displayed on tracks because that’s the way it was designed to operate. A raised platform allows handicapped persons to view the vehicle’s interior. Accompanying the trolley in the museum is a new permanent exhibit Growing Home. This displays the history of Aurora, depicting the city’s community life, neighborhoods, schools, police and firefighting activities, businesses, military bases, water supply, and transportation.

Used in the above story were Aurora Sentinel articles by Adam Goldstein (12/10/2009); Sara Castellanos (6/3/2010); Rachel Sapin (9/25-10/1/2014); and Quincy Snowdon (11/27-12/1/2014).
OUR LOSS OF ART WALLACE
We regret the loss of charter member Arthur Wallace, who died on January 10 at age 88. Art was one of the original five members of the Board of Directors of the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society and its first vice-president. The September 1975 edition of the Quill described him as a “mechanical engineer; former president of the Smoky Hill Landowners Association; one of the organizers and first president of the Clear Creek Canyon Historical Society of Chaffee County; primary area of historical interest is Denver and Gulf Railroad; resident of Cherry Creek area for 6 years.” Art was the chairman of Phase I of the restoration of the Melvin Schoolhouse, which involved readying it for the move to its current location. In 1980 he presented CCVHS with a well researched program on early railroads of Colorado. He wrote A Capsule History of the Railroad along Cherry Creek, which will appear in condensed form in a future Quill. Art Wallace was a huge part of the founding and growth of our historical society, and our condolences go to his wife Bernice. He will be greatly missed.

MEMBER NEWS
We sincerely thank Kathleen Sherman for renewing as a life member of CCVHS and for her donation in memory of her cousin Bob Engel. Kathleen (“Katy”) was a second grader at Melvin, and her teacher was her mother Anna Crain. Garry met with her and her son Jeff last October when they were traveling through this area on their way back to Oregon. She shared many photographs and memories of her years at several schools in Colorado, as her mother taught at many schools here. We especially thank her for donating her Bible to CCVHS, a gift we will long treasure. In an upcoming Quill we will reprint her interview by the communications staff of the Cherry Creek School District and feature several of the photographs she donated.

We thank Jody Zeman for her donation to CCVHS with her renewal. Thank you also to the CCVHS members renewing at the supporting level including Vonnie C’deBaca, Garry O’Hara, the John Baker family, Ruth Fountain, C. Ruth Dolan, E. Michael Rosser, Joanie Mead, and David Willman. We also appreciate the donation to CCVHS by the Tiger Den of Aurora Cub Scout Pack 317. These Scouts visited Melvin School last fall and visited again on February 14th.

MELVIN SCHOOLHOUSE NEWS
We are planning to hold open houses at the Melvin School. Open houses/bake sales are planned for the first Tuesday of each month, May through September. We are using the open houses as opportunities to work on archiving the library and museum collections and improving the exhibits at Melvin; these “work” times would be from 9:30am to noon. After a lunch hour for the volunteers, the actual open houses would be held from 1:00 to 4:00pm. Volunteers are needed to greet visitors, provide tours of the school, bring and sell bake-sale items, and clean up before and after open houses. Contact Nita McKnight at herbnita@msn.com (303-770-1848) or Sherrie Wolf at g-swolf@comcast.net (303-343-8212). More on this in future Quills or emails.
A volunteer appreciation event was held on April 10th to thank the volunteers for sharing their many talents and time this past year at 17 Mile House. Activities in 2014 included open houses, Fall Festival, school visits, barn and house cleaning, donating items for the house, and holiday decorating. Guest speakers at the meeting included Glen Poole and Bill Bauer from the Arapahoe County Open Spaces, Casey Davenhill from the Cherry Creek Stewardship Partners, and CCVHS member Karen Sear. Glen and Bill informed us that construction will begin on the milk house in May or June for restoration work on the foundation, windows, and roof. Open spaces is also working on a grant to apply for funds from the Colorado State Historical Fund to help restore the iconic red barn. Casey gave a surprise presentation of the Stewardship Partners’ 2014 award to CCVHS of a beautiful engraved plaque with a special water dipper hanging from it. The dipper has historical significance of the celestial “big dipper” for navigation and of the water dipper used in times past by all the travelers who stopped at 17 Mile House to share a drink of water near the Cherry Creek. We are honored to receive their award of a $250 donation (received at their annual conference in November 2014) and this plaque and dipper to hang inside 17 Mile House. Certificates of Thanks and seed packet gifts were given to the volunteers, and refreshments were provided by Open Spaces. A total of 1275 hours were logged to make it a very successful first year for the 17 Mile House Volunteers – our heartfelt thanks to each of you!

Special thanks goes to volunteer Elaine Plym for her $100 donation to help support the 17 Mile House school visit program.

Arapahoe County Fair: Join 17 Mile House Volunteers to promote our local history with 17 Mile House and CCVHS information by staffing an information booth for select hours during the fair. Includes butter churning demonstration, “guess the object” (items from 17MH barn), and diary/journal display (children can make their own journal at heritage tent staffed by Arapahoe Co. volunteers). Arapahoe Co. Fairgrounds is near Quincy Road and E470. Includes free parking and admission to the fairgrounds (not including carnival rides). Handicapped parking is available.

Thursday, July 23 4:00pm - 6:00pm
Friday, July 24 11:00am - 2:00pm
Saturday, July 25 1:00pm - 4:00pm
Sunday, July 26 1:00pm - 4:00pm

We are looking for old laundry washboards and clothespins to use at the Arapahoe County Fair for a children’s heritage activity. If you can help us with a loan or donation, please contact Karen Sear at seark@msn.com or 303-514-2094. Thank you!

CEMETERY TOURS
There has been a change in this year’s cemetery tours for Doors Open Denver. The Doors Open Denver event is being held again this year on April 25-26, but this year’s cemetery tours will be given at Fairmount Cemetery only and the fee is $10 for non-members of the Denver Architectural Foundation. See doorsopendependver.com. However, free tours of both Fairmount and Riverside Cemeteries will be given this September as part of the What’s Out There Weekend series of The Cultural Landscape Foundation. The exact weekend in September has yet to be determined. Check future Quills or CCVHS emails.
EXHIBITS AT THE AURORA HISTORY MUSEUM

Treat yourself to a visit to the Aurora History Museum to experience the restored trolley trailer and the new Growing Home display. Other exhibits include the following. Through May 10th the museum is showing the photo and artifact display *The Way We Worked*, which addresses the basic questions Where did people work? How was the work done? With whom did they work? and Why did they work? Explore the people of the professions and manual occupations over the last 150 years in this exhibit that is on loan from the Smithsonian Institution.

Through July 19th the museum is presenting *The Art of Tea*. Did you know that Celestial Seasonings commissions new artwork for every new box of tea? Come and view a selection of this original art and see how the artistic styles have changed over the years. The biennial Antique Appraisal Fair will take place on Saturday April 25 from 9am to 3pm at the museum. The cost is $5 per antique or collectible with a five-item limit. Each attendee must call (303) 739-6705 for an assigned appraisal time; no walk-ins will be accepted. The Aurora History Museum has many other upcoming programs and tours, and all are free of charge. Visit its website at auroramuseum.org or call (303) 739-6660. The museum is located in the Aurora civic complex at 15051 E. Alameda Pkwy, Aurora 80012. Hours are Tuesdays-Fridays 9am-4pm and Saturdays-Sundays 11am-4pm. Admission is always free.

NEWS OF OTHER SOCIETIES

The Four Mile Historic Park (FMHP) features Denver’s oldest standing house (1859) and an enjoyable 12-acre farm park. April-September hours are Wednesdays-Fridays noon-4pm and Saturdays-Sundays 10am-4pm (includes a guided tour of the house/museum). General admission is $5 for adults 18-64; $4 for seniors 65+ and military with ID; $3 for youth 7-17; and free for children 6 and under and for FMHP members. Admission to the park is free on the first Friday of each month. FMHP is holding its annual Colorado Corks & Cuisine fundraising event on Thursday May 21 from 5:30pm to 8:30pm. Here you can sample the foods and products of 29 local restaurants, wineries, distilleries, and breweries. Tickets are $30 for members ($40 for non-members), and advance reservations are encouraged. Call 720-865-0815 for more information or go to info@fourmilepark.org to purchase tickets on-line. The Four Mile Historic Park is located at 715 S. Forest St., Denver 80246. For more information general visit FourMilePark.org or call 720-865-0800.

History Colorado (the state historical society) is continuing its exhibit on the year 1968 through May 10th. According to its Colorado Heritage magazine, “Nearly fifty years later, 1968 remains one of America’s more powerful and transformative years. The 1968 Exhibit reveals how the events of the year created lasting changes in nearly every aspect of American life.” The museum is located on the northeast corner of 12th Avenue and Broadway in downtown Denver. Admission is $12 for adults; $10 for seniors and students; $8 for children; children 5 and under and members free. Visit HistoryColoradoCenter.org or call 303-HISTORY.

And CCVHS gives a big “thank you” to Historic Douglas County, Inc. (HDC), one of the most active and important historical organizations in our region. Its stated mission is “to expand and enrich public awareness of Douglas County history through education and communication, and through support and coordination among local historical organizations and other related groups.” In its on-line newsletter Historic Douglas County reprints every issue of the Quill in its entirety and promotes CCVHS’s 17 Mile House open houses and other major activities. Check it out at historicdouglascounty.org.
A BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE MELVIN SCHOOL

1922 - The Melvin School was built in the NW1/4 of Section 13, T5S, R67W, Arapahoe County, Colorado on land donated by Hans Dransfeldt. The DeBoer brothers built the school for $4,450. The original site was at the junction of Bellevue Avenue and the old Sullivan Road (now Jordan Road) in Cherry Creek State Park. The school opened in September of 1922.

1949 - Families in the community of Melvin received condemnation papers telling them to move from the area in preparation for the building of the dam. The school was included in this area, and it closed its doors in June of 1949. The building was sold to J. Edwin Stout for $1,500. He sold it to William Minshall who had it moved to the southwest corner of the intersection of Parker Road and Quincy Avenue (Section 12, T5S, R67W).

1953 - After extensive remodeling, the former schoolhouse opened as the Emerald Isle Tavern on Saint Patrick's Day. Glenn Barrier managed it as Glenn's Emerald Isle Tavern until 1970.

1975 - Five area residents who were interested in local history and in saving the old Melvin School incorporated and became the first Board of Directors of the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society, Inc. They persuaded Mr. Silverberg to donate the building to the Society in trade for their moving it elsewhere and leveling the site after the moving of the building. The Society's purpose was to restore the old Melvin School and to use it as a classroom-museum-library for the study and collection of local historical information.

1976 - Cherry Creek School District offered a site on the campus of Smoky Hill High School. It was moved on December 14, 1976.

1977-1981 - With the help of the community, the school district, and the historical society, the Melvin School was restored. The exterior was authentically restored as was one classroom. The second classroom, the one which originally had a stage, was adaptively restored into a museum and a library. A plaque which honors those who helped in the restoration has been engraved with the slogan: "Restored by the Community - For the Community."

1984 - The Melvin School was put on the National Register of Historic Places.

1988 - The City of Aurora honored the Melvin School as Aurora Historic Landmark #1.

The Quill is the quarterly newsletter of the Cherry Creek Valley Historical Society (CCVHS). The purposes of the Society are to study, record, preserve, and display the history of the Cherry Creek Valley and surrounding areas. Membership is open to anyone interested in this history. Quarterly general meetings are usually held at the Melvin Schoolhouse, 4950 S. Laredo St. (between Smoky Hill High School and Laredo Middle School) in Aurora, Colo. Correspondence concerning The Quill should be directed to Garry O’Hara, editor, at (303) 751-3140.