

An Inventory of the Records of
The Auraria Town Company

AURARIA TOWN COMPANY

ORIGINAL SHARE, NO. 59 CERTIFICATE NO. 1

THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That D.D. Hoage
is the owner of ONE FOURTH OF ONE ORIGINAL SHARE in
The Capital Stock of the AURARIA TOWN COMPANY, which entitles the
owner of this Certificate to Four Lots in the Town of Auraria, to be drawn
under such Rules and Regulations as may be prescribed by said Company.
No Transfer recognized unless endorsed by the Secretary and recorded
in the books of the Company.
Given by Authority, at the office of said Company in Auraria, this 8th
Day of July A.D. 1859.

Attest. L.J. Russell
Secretary

W.A. McFadding
President

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the Library of the Colorado Historical Society
Denver, Colorado 80203

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& Tracie Etheredge

February 1993
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HISTORICAL INFORMATION

In May 1854, as part of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Congress created the Territory of Kansas. Among the acts of the first legislative assembly of Kansas Territory was that of creating Arapahoe County, signed by Acting Governor Dan Woodson on August 25, 1855. The County, named for the Indian tribes that predominated in the plains area, embraced all of Kansas Territory west of the 103rd meridian (or about one fourth of the area of present-day Colorado).

Although the act appointed several officers for the new county, none of them actually ventured to the area to serve their posts. The first general election held in Kansas Territory was held on October 6, 1856.

In February 1858, William Green Russell and his brothers Oliver and Levi set out from Georgia with six companies, heading for the west. By May 23, they and other fortune hunters who had joined them on the trail reached a site where Cherry Creek flows into the South Platte River. They had little luck prospecting for gold in the river beds until July, when the Russell brothers and ten other men who had stayed with them found gold at the mouth of Dry Creek.

The group ventured further into the mountains in the hope of finding more gold. When they returned to the Cherry Creek area, the group found a party of men from Lawrence, Kansas settled along the creek. John Easter, a butcher from Lawrence, had heard rumors of the Russells' earlier finds

along Cherry Creek and organized a party to travel into the area and try their luck at prospecting. The Lawrence party had been disappointed to find the Russells' gold pocket already cleaned out by the time they reached Cherry Creek, but they decided to capitalize on the situation by staking out a town. In September 1858, they organized the town of Montana City, a little to the north of Dry Creek, but the town was very short-lived. The town organizers recognized the advantages of another site, 640 acres lying eastward of the Platte River and Cherry Creek, where they organized the town of St. Charles.

On September 24, 1858, the St. Charles Town Company adopted a constitution. Members of the town company met on September 28 at William McGaa's lodge and elected the following officers: president, Adnah French; vice president, William McGaa; secretary, T.C. Dickson; treasurer, John S. Smith; and recorder, Frank M. Cobb. On October 2, 1858, the by-laws of the St. Charles Town Company were drafted.

St. Charles was abandoned almost immediately after the meeting on October 2, when all the company's men, except McGaa and John Smith, returned to Kansas to file the incorporation documents, advertise their new venture and avoid the harsh weather of winter. Smith and McGaa agreed to look after the company's interests at St. Charles, but they failed to maintain the company's claim on the land.

The St. Charles Town Company was the only one of the Cherry Creek settlements to incorporate. It had been organized strictly as a business venture, with closed stock that required settlers to buy into the organization, but the town never succeeded in building any structures or improving their site in any way.

As news of the gold in the Cherry Creek area began to spread, more and more settlers moved into the area. And as the population on Cherry Creek increased, a public meeting was held and a new town company was established in competition with St. Charles on the west side of Cherry Creek. The new Auraria Town Company, named after a town in the Georgia gold region, staked out its site and advertised free entry to all settlers. However, the formal organization of the Auraria Town Company was not completed until November 6, 1858, when it adopted a constitution. The first officers of the company were: William A. McFadding, J.G. Dudley, L.J. Russell, John S. Smith and Henry Allen.

In mid-November of 1858, General William Larimer led a group of men from Kansas into the Cherry Creek area. The general, his son William Jr., and their friend Richard Whitsitt were experienced town promoters. They joined forces with a group of men from Lecompton, Kansas, commanded by Edward Wynkoop. In Wynkoop's party were men appointed by Kansas Governor James W. Denver to serve as officers of Arapahoe County. They were H.P.A. Smith, probate judge; Hickory Rogers, chairman of the county board of supervisors, and Edward Wynkoop himself as sheriff.

Larimer's group acquired the abandoned St. Charles townsite and formed the Denver City Company. This Leavenworth party at once interested others who had recently arrived at Cherry Creek, among whom were: E.P. Stout, P.T. Bassett, Judson H. Dudley, Charles M. Blake, A.J. Williams, William Clancy, plus McGaa and John Smith. The name "Denver City" was formally approved at the first meeting of November 17th, with a unanimous vote by all the leaders of the enterprise. The name of the new city was bestowed in honor of Governor James W. Denver, the fifth territorial Governor of Kansas. The constitution of the company was

adopted on November 22, 1858, and officers were elected at the same time. The by-laws of the company were adopted on January 10, 1859.

A few days after the Denver City Town Company was organized, Wynkoop was sent back to the capital of Kansas Territory to have the new company properly and legally incorporated. When he arrived there, he found that the St. Charles men had a bill pending to incorporate St. Charles. When Wynkoop saw that he could not get the “Denver City” bill converted into law, he proposed peace and persuaded the St. Charles men to admit him, General William Larimer, Jr., and Charles Lawrence into the St. Charles Company. Wynkoop’s failure to get a charter for the Denver City Company did not keep the Company from going ahead with its town plans that winter.

The St. Charles group did nothing to assert its rights to the site on Cherry Creek, and the company soon dissolved, with nearly all its members joining the Denver City Company.

The towns of Auraria and Denver existed antagonistically, with Cherry Creek dividing them, until 1860. On April 5, 1860, the leaders of the two rival communities met on a wooden bridge spanning the creek and celebrated the union of the two enterprises. Auraria merged to become part of the booming city of Denver, the center of the growing territory.

Today, on the original settlement site of the Auraria Town Company, is the Auraria Higher Education Center, completed in 1976. The Auraria campus is home to Metropolitan State College of Denver (authorized in 1963), the Community College of Denver (established 1968) and the University of Colorado at Denver. The three institutions share facilities and cooperate in administering a library and other centralized facilities, yet retain their own separate identities and programs.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1854 May: As part of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Congress creates the Territory of Kansas.
- 1855 August 25: Arapahoe County is created by an act of the first legislative assembly of Kansas Territory.
- 1856 October 6: The first general election is held in Kansas Territory.
- 1858 February: William Green Russell and his brothers Oliver and Levi, with six companies, set out from Georgia for the West.
- July: Members of the Russell party find gold in the bed of Dry Creek, near its confluence with the South Platte River.
- August 26: Gold dust samples arrive in Kansas City and ignite emigration from the Missouri Valley to the “Pike’s Peak Gold Regions.”
- September: Montana City is organized by a group from Lawrence, Kansas.
- October: A double cabin is erected for John Smith and Dr. L.J. Russell, near 11th Street and Wewatta.
- October 2: The by-laws of the St. Charles Town Company are written.
- October 29: A general store is opened by Blake and Williams, both from Crescent City, Iowa.
- November 6: The Auraria Town Company is formally organized and its constitution adopted.
- November 16: A party of settlers arrives at Auraria from Leavenworth, Kansas. Among them: Folsom Dorsett, M.M. Jewett, General William Larimer, Jr., his son William H.H. Larimer, C.A. Lawrence and Richard E. Whitsett.

November 17: The name “Denver City” is formally approved at that company’s first meeting.

November 22: The constitution for the Denver City Town Company is adopted. The area, about 2 miles square, includes the former St. Charles claim.

December: Christopher “Kit” Carson takes up residence in Auraria until some time in 1862.

December 1: The region’s population stands at about 250-300.

1859 January 19: The by-laws of the Denver City Town Company are adopted.

February: A ferry is established across the South Platte River by the mouth of Cherry Creek, connecting Denver City and Auraria.

March 28: The first local election of county officers for Arapahoe County is held.

April 7: The first murder is recorded in the new settlements. Execution of the alleged perpetrator is conducted on April 9.

April 15: Ten delegates from six communities meet in convention in Auraria at Dick Wooton’s store to pass resolutions to organize the “State of Jefferson.” The movement is defeated, however, in the election of September 5, 1859.

April 23: The first edition of the Rocky Mountain News is published in Auraria. The Cherry Creek Pioneer follows by a few minutes.

May 7: Passenger service from the east begins with the arrival of the first stagecoach on the Leavenworth and Pike’s Peak Express. Fare from Leavenworth to Denver: \$100.00.

June: Auraria, Kansas Territory, is officially made a post office town.

September 5: Movement for forming the “State of Jefferson” is defeated in a regional general election.

October 10: The constitution of the Territory of Jefferson is adopted.

1860 April: Mail service into Denver connects with Pony Express line at Julesburg. Stagecoach carries on into Denver.

April 3: Auraria votes to become part of Denver City, henceforth referred to in documents as “Denver City, West Division.”

April 5: The leaders of the two rival communities of Auraria and Denver City celebrate the union of the two enterprises.

1861 Congress passes a bill organizing the Territory of Colorado.

February 28: Colorado Territory created by U.S. Congress.

May 27: William Gilpin, the first Colorado Territorial governor, arrives.

November 7: The first territorial legislature grants a charter to the city of Denver.

1876 The State of Colorado is established.

1902 November 4: The Thirteenth General Assembly of the Territory of Colorado divides Arapahoe County and creates Denver County, Adams County and South Arapahoe County.

1963 Metropolitan State College of Denver is established.

1968 The Community College of Denver is established.

1976 The Auraria Higher Education Center is completed on the original settlement site of the Auraria Town Company. The Auraria campus is home to Metropolitan State College of Denver, the Community College of Denver and the University of Colorado at Denver. The three institutions share facilities, yet retain their separate identities and programs.

COLLECTION CONTENTS

- | FF | Description |
|----|---|
| 1 | Original record book of Auraria Town Company, later merged with the Denver City Town Company, containing the City Warrants 1-58, December 7, 1858-August 11, 1859; List of Stockholders, November 1, 1858; Constitution and Minutes of town board, October 30, 1858-May 5, 1860. |
| 2 | Typescript (2 copies), Auraria Town Company, Kansas Territory. Original record, October 30, 1858-May 5, 1860. |
| 3 | Contract. Denver City Town Company and the Leavenworth City & Pikes Peak Express Company, May 11, 1859, 1 p. Contract to make Denver City its terminus in return for 9 original shares in the town company. |
| 4 | Original Share, Auraria Town Company. Original Share No. 59, Certificate No. 1 to A.D. Hoage. One fourth of one original share in the capital stock of the Auraria Town Company, which entitles A.D. Hoage to four lots in the town of Auraria. Signed W.A. McFadding, president and L.J. Russell, secretary, July 8, 1859. |
| 5 | Draft of an Act to charter and consolidate the City of Denver, Auraria and Highland, 1859. Territory of Jefferson Council File No. 25. Read first time Nov. 26 th and under suspension of rules read a second time and referred to Com. on Judiciary. Reported back and ordered to be engrossed. 32 pp. |
| 6 | Typescript, "History of Auraria," excerpt from The Commonwealth Magazine, 1889. Document Division, the Denver Museum Collection, 1933. 10 p. |
| 7 | Colono Town Claim, August 8, 1859. Colono Town Company claims a tract of land for their town site... as surveyed February 2, 1859 by W.S. Foster. 1 p. (plus 4 photostat copies) |

- 8 Golden Gate Town Claims “Claim for 1280 acres of land for a town site at the foot of the mountains where the rode passes into the mountains to Gregory diggings...” June 8, 1859. 1 p.
- Claim for an addition to the Town of Golden Gate, November 26, 1859. 1 p.
- Claim for 160 acres of land as a town site, July 5, 1859, J. B. Gard & Co. 1 p.
- Quit Claim Deed. Golden Gate Town Company to Nathaniel McRimmey, September 20, 1859. 1 p.
- 9 Shian Pass Town Co. Claim Boundary line of Town of Shian Pass Town Co., June 18, 1859. 1 p.
- 10 Minehaha Town and Marble Co. Statement of Claim “...for the purpose of building a town and working our marble quarry at the same place...” November 16, 1859, 1 p.
- 11 Park Gate City Company Town Site Claim August 11, 1859, 1 p.
- Ranch Claim, August 11, 1859, 1 p.