

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

5AH 204

historic John Gully Homestead

and or common John Gully Homestead

2. Location

street & number 200 South Chambers Road n/a not for publication

city, town Aurora n/a vicinity of

state Colorado code 08 county Arapahoe code 005

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u>N/a</u> district	<u>X</u> public	<u>N/a</u> occupied	<u>N/a</u> agriculture <u>X</u> museum
<u>X</u> building(s)	<u>N/a</u> private	<u>X</u> unoccupied	<u>N/a</u> commercial <u>N/a</u> park
<u>N/a</u> structure	<u>N/a</u> both	<u>N/a</u> work in progress	<u>N/a</u> educational <u>N/a</u> private residence
<u>N/a</u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u>N/a</u> entertainment <u>N/a</u> religious
<u>N/a</u> object	<u>N/a</u> in process	<u>X</u> yes: restricted	<u>N/a</u> government <u>N/a</u> scientific
	<u>N/a</u> being considered	<u>N/a</u> yes: unrestricted	<u>N/a</u> industrial <u>N/a</u> transportation
		<u>N/a</u> no	<u>N/a</u> military <u>N/a</u> other:

4. Owner of Property

name City of Aurora

street & number 1470 South Havana Street

city, town Aurora n/a vicinity of state Colorado

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Arapahoe County Courthouse

street & number 5334 South Prince Street

city, town Littleton state Colorado

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Aurora Historic Preservation
Inventory, Volume Ihas this property been determined eligible? yes X nodate 1978 federal state county X local

depository for survey records Colorado Historical Society, OAHF, 1300 Broadway

city, town Denver state Colorado

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<u>N/a</u> excellent	<u>N/a</u> deteriorated	<u>N/a</u> unaltered	<u>N/a</u> original site	
<u>X</u> good	<u>N/a</u> ruins	<u>X</u> altered	<u>X</u> moved	date 1978, 1983
<u>N/a</u> fair	<u>N/a</u> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The John Gully Homestead House is located on the southern edge of the Bresnahan Ranch Complex, a short distance northeast of the intersection of East Alameda and South Chambers Road in Aurora. The homestead house faces south, with a small stable situated to the southeast, the only other structure moved from the original site.

The setting is rural, located on 137 acres owned by the City of Aurora, and preserved in its natural state. Willows, cottonwoods, wildflowers, and wild grasses cover the surrounding area, along with wildlife such as field mice, pheasant, snakes, rabbits, foxes, muskrats, cranes, and blackbirds. Tollgate Creek passes to the east of the site, and the Highline Canal runs just south of the homestead house.

The Gully House is a single detached, frame dwelling with gabled roof, and a T-shaped plan. The one and a half story front portion features a central entrance flanked by windows on either side. The windows are wood frame, double-hung, six over six sash. Each of the gable ends contain one ground floor window and one smaller loft window. The door is wood frame, with plain surrounds, double arched window panes, and wood panels.

The covered front porch features slender wood supports with plain caps and bases. There are three single brick chimneys: one on the north end and used for the cooking stove; one on the west end; and one on the east end. There are no fireplaces in the structure.

The one story rear section features a gabled roof, doors on either side, a six over six sash window on the west side, and a small window identical to the loft windows on the east side. The uncovered porch on the west side has a wood plank floor. A sleeping porch on the east side was not reconstructed.

There are three interior rooms and a loft. Where possible, the original lathe and plaster walls have been restored, and each room has been painted in what was determined to be original colors. Each room features wood floors, molded baseboards, and tongue-and-groove beaded board ceilings. The kitchen ceiling, located in the one story rear section, is arched, and the window on the east side has built-in shelves and batten shutters. When the sleeping porch was attached to the east side, this window served as an interior opening. Cabinets are attached to the north wall. There are wood doors leading to each room and a stairway leads to the unfinished loft area through a separate door.

The stable is a simple square structure with a flat roof, vertical board siding, and a plain door. There are no windows. A trough is the only interior feature.

The original setting of the ranch was at East Mississippi and South Chambers Road, about two miles directly south of the current location. The house sits facing the same direction as its original location in relation to the road and Tollgate Creek. There were no outbuildings on the original site other than the stable and corrals. The corrals were not salvagable.

The house has been restored to the earliest known date - 1871. Linen strips and a 1870 German newspaper used for insulation, found during the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet John Gully Homestead Item number 7 Page 2

restoration, confirmed the construction date. The exterior was in poor condition following years of neglect, and some new materials were used in the restoration. Old photographs aided in the restoration, particularly in the reconstruction of the porches. *restoration*

majority The clapboards on the east side of the house are original, while those on the west side are replacement clapboards. The original foundation was of sandstone from Tollgate Creek, and although standards prevented use of a similar foundation on the new site, sandstone from the creek was used to edge the concrete ledge on which the house sits. Two of the windows are originals, and the others were designed to match. Old photographs revealed the original design of the doors which were missing. These were milled by carpenters to match the originals. Old bricks *matching* found near the property were used to replace the exterior portions of the chimneys which were missing. *architect*

None of the porches existed in 1978, but photographic evidence and ghost lines on the facades revealed the location and configuration of the missing porches. There were two different front porches, and the earliest porch was restored. One of the upright porch supports was discovered under the corner facade, and was used as a model for the other porch supports. The sleeping porch on the east facade was not reconstructed due to evidence that it was a 20th century addition, and because no photographic evidence existed to provide clues to its appearance. *20th century*

The original hardware on some of the doors, locks and cabinets existed, and old hardware was purchased to match originals. *Some* No hinges survived, although reproductions of original period hinges were used. Most of the flooring and ceiling materials are original.

The stable was not originally part of the Gully homestead, but part of the Tollgate School which was adjacent to the Gully property. When the school closed, early in the 20th century, the Gullys acquired the structure and moved it to their property. It has not been altered.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

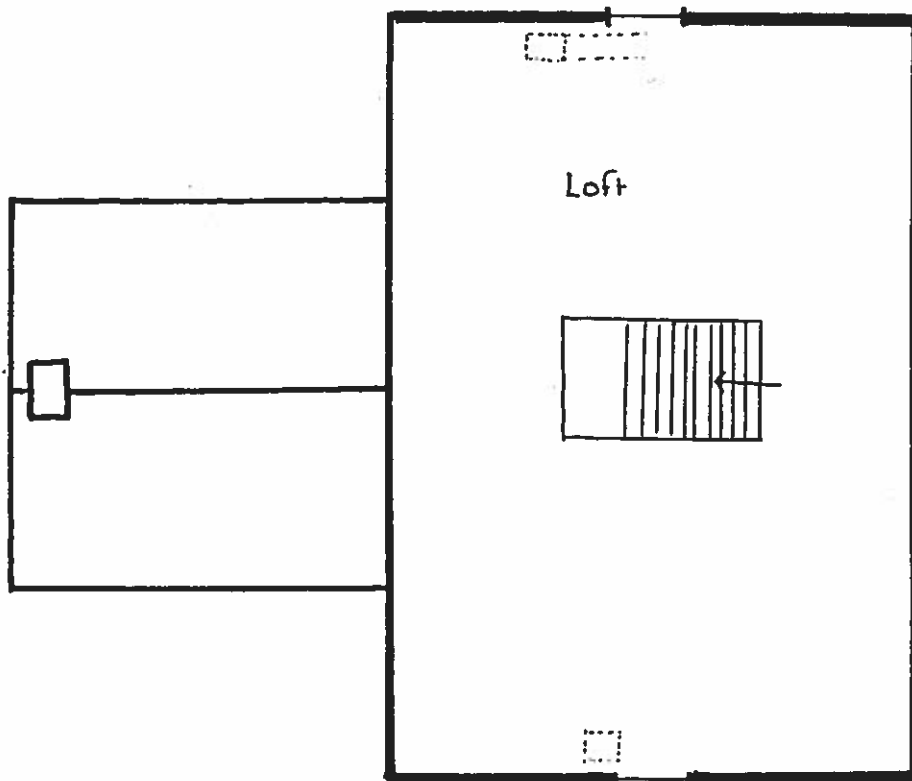
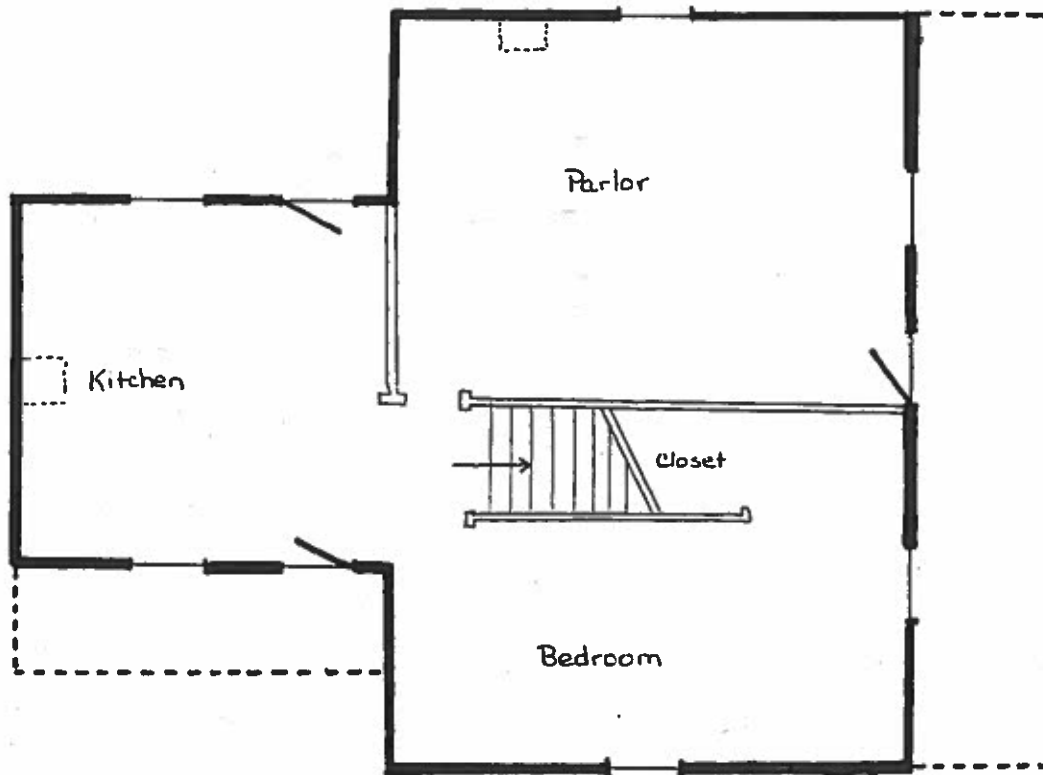
For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet John Gully Homestead Item number 7 Page 3

N ←



8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<u>N/A</u> prehistoric	<u>N/A</u> archeology-prehistoric	<u>N/A</u> community planning	<u>N/A</u> landscape architecture	<u>N/A</u> religion
<u>N/A</u> 1400-1499	<u>N/A</u> archeology-historic	<u>N/A</u> conservation	<u>N/A</u> law	<u>N/A</u> science
<u>N/A</u> 1500-1599	<u>X</u> agriculture	<u>N/A</u> economics	<u>N/A</u> literature	<u>N/A</u> sculpture
<u>N/A</u> 1600-1699	<u>N/A</u> architecture	<u>N/A</u> education	<u>N/A</u> military	<u>N/A</u> social/
<u>N/A</u> 1700-1799	<u>N/A</u> art	<u>N/A</u> engineering	<u>N/A</u> music	humanitarian
<u>X</u> 1800-1899	<u>N/A</u> commerce	<u>X</u> exploration/settlement	<u>N/A</u> philosophy	<u>N/A</u> theater
<u>N/A</u> 1900-	<u>N/A</u> communications	<u>N/A</u> industry	<u>N/A</u> politics/government	<u>N/A</u> transportation
		<u>N/A</u> invention		<u>N/A</u> other (specify)

Specific dates 1870-1871 Builder/Architect Unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The John Gully Homestead is significant as the oldest known dwelling and one of the few remaining agricultural related structures in Aurora, and for its association with John Gully and his family, early settlers of Aurora.

Aurora, Colorado is one of the fastest growing communities in the United States, with a 1985 population of 208,000, compared to 70,000 in 1970, an increase of 111%. Aurora's history is based in the agricultural heritage of the 1890s in Eastern Colorado, but significant growth caused by the influx of the military during the 1920s and 1940s, and the business and residential growth of the 1970s and 1980s, has left but a few remnants of the city's agricultural beginnings.

Early development of this region was associated with the Fur Trade and early transportation along the various trails, four of which passed through this area. Stage stations were located close to the Gully property for many years. Many of the first settlers, disillusioned with the promise of wealth in the mining camps, elected to settle on the plains near Denver, and farm. With the arrival of the railroad in 1870, and the influx of European investors, the farm land in what is now Aurora was quickly settled. Encouraged and recruited by English investment companies, many Irish, Scottish, and English farmers moved to this area to homestead, either on leased land or on land they themselves homesteaded.

Thomas and Temperance Gully came to this country from Tipperary, Ireland with their children, and built the little house near Tollgate Creek in 1870. According to a 1879 deed, Thomas Gully was granted a homestead on 80 acres on the north half of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 20. Although he died around 1880, and Temperance died in 1889, their sons Thomas Jr. and John continued to live on the property, and add to the homestead so that eventually, the Gully family owned 1120 acres. Another daughter, Bridget Gully and her husband John Delaney, homesteaded just north of the Gully property, in Section 8. It is on this property that the Gully homestead house now stands.

The Gully family raised beef and dairy cattle on their ranch initially, but became more well known when John Gully began raising delivery horses, and selling them to local businessmen. In later years, the Gully Rodeo Association held summer rodeos on the Gully Ranch which were widely known. The family also leased grazing land to local ranchers, and during the Depression, were known as bootleggers (a fact which family members readily admit).

Characteristic of most agricultural communities, the local grange was an important part of social life for the ranchers and farmers. Granges provided a place to gather, to hold special events and activities, and to socialize with neighbors. The Gully family was active in the Sable Grange,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet John Gully Homestead Item number 8 Page 2

organized in 1908. They were also active in local democratic politics, and served as officers of the Tollgate School District.

John Gully married Elizabeth Clifford in 1892 and raised ~~five~~ children in the small homestead house. Their daughters taught school at the nearby Tollgate School house, and their three sons helped with the ranch. John Gully died in 1915, and Elizabeth died in 1927. Their sons carried on with the ranch. James, the eldest son, born in 1896, lived on the homestead in the same little house until his death in 1962. The Gully family then moved their cattle and hay operation to Kiowa, Colorado.

The Gully house stood vacant until 1978 when it was determined that the house sat in a 100 year flood plain and was directly in the path of a proposed runoff canal. The owners of the property at the time, Medema Homes, Inc., decided to give the home to the City of Aurora with the provision that it be moved to a new location. Later that year, the house and stable were moved to Heritage Park next to the Justice Center on East Alameda Drive. The house was relatively easy to move because of its size, and the mover used the I-beam and roller method on a flatbed truck. The house stood on a concrete foundation at this site for several years.

Following the 1982 purchase of the Delaney (Bresnahan) Ranch, the City decided to move the Gully house to a site on the southern edge of the Delaney ranch. The move was completed in 1983 by the same mover. Since that time, the house has been completely restored and plans are underway to reconstruct some of the corrals as part of a proposed Gully-Delaney living history agricultural complex.

The Gully house has been restored to the earliest known date - 1871. Overall, the majority of the original fabric of the structure is intact. In areas where the original material was not salvagable, samples were retained and used as models for the reconstruction. Some materials from more recent alterations, such as linoleum from the kitchen floor, were also retained.

A 1985 survey of Aurora revealed that this home is the oldest dwelling within the city limits. Rapid development has all but eliminated the agricultural remains of Aurora. Only the Gully and Delaney properties remain as representatives of the agricultural heritage of Aurora.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Aurora History Center, Aurora, CO, Gully Homestead Collection.
Aurora History Center, Aurora, CO, Donna M. Halsey and Nancy J. Graham,
"Gully Homestead Report." 1981
McFadden, Carl Vincent, et al. Early Aurora. Aurora, CO: Aurora Technical
Center. 1978. con'

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 3

Quadrangle name Fitzsimons

Quadrangle scale 1:24 000

UTM References

A 13 516380 4395640
Zone Easting Northing

B
Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification Bounded by City property line bordering
the Highline Canal on the south; South Chambers Road on the west; Tollgate
Creek on the east; and the southern edge of the Delaney property on the
north. Township 4 South, Range 66 West, Section 8, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state n/a code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Sarah J. Pearce, Consultant

organization date September 13, 1985

street & number 888 South Dexter, #710 telephone 303 691-0187

city or town Denver state CO Colorado

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

 national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet John Gully Homestead Item number 9 Page 2

Change
Mehls, Steven F. and Carol Drake. "The Making of a Megaburb: The
History of Aurora," Manuscript, 1984.

Steinel, Alvin T. History of Agriculture in Colorado. Fort Collins,
CO: Colorado State Agricultural College. 1926.



Gully Homestead

1 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Sally Pearce

May 20, 1985

Negatives: Aurora History Center

Gully House looking north



Gully Homestead

Arapahoe County, Colorado

2 of 9

Photographer: Sally Pearce

May 20, 1985

Negatives: Aurora History Center

Gully House looking southwest



Gully Homestead

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Sally Pearce

August 13, 1985

Negatives: Aurora History Center

Gully House looking east

3 of 9



Gully Homestead

4 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Sally Pearce

Negatives: Aurora History Center

August 13, 1985

Gully House looking east



Gully Homestead . 5 of 9
Arapahoe County, Colorado
Photographer: Sally Pearce
August 13, 1985
Negatives: Aurora History Center
Wood shed, Gully Homestead, looking N



Gully Homestead

6 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Unknown

November, 1978

Negatives: Aurora History Center

House being moved to Justice Center

Looking East



Gully Homestead 7 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Virginia Steele

April, 1981

House on foundation at Justice Center

Looking east

Negatives: Aurora History Center



Gully Homestead

8 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Unknown

Date unknown by prior to 1978

Original site of homestead

Negatives: Aurora History Center



Gully Homestead

9 of 9

Arapahoe County, Colorado

Photographer: Sally Pearce

May 20, 1985

Negatives: Aurora History Center

Homestead House and Delaney Complex
Looking southwest