

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Nevada	
COUNTY: Mineral	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUL 30 1974

1. NAME

COMMON: Aurora
AND/OR HISTORIC: Same

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: SW of Hawthorne 4 miles southwest of Lucky Boy Pass road at a point 23 miles			
CITY OR TOWN: southwest of Hawthorne vic.			
STATE Nevada	CODE 32	COUNTY: Mineral	CODE 021

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) unoccupied ghost town <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: List of owners attached		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:

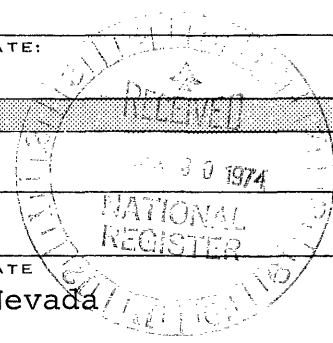
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Mineral County Courthouse		
STREET AND NUMBER: 1st and A Streets		
CITY OR TOWN: Hawthorne	STATE: Nevada	CODE: 32

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Nevada Historical Sites		
DATE OF SURVEY: 1966-67	XX Federal	XX State
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Univ. of Nev., Desert Research Institute, Center for Western Studies		
STREET AND NUMBER:		
CITY OR TOWN: Stead Campus, Reno	STATE: Nevada	CODE: 32

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:
COUNTY:
ENTRY NUMBER: JUL 30 1974
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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good
<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
(Check One)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered
<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Aurora townsite lies in a depression in the mountains of the Esmeralda Mining District at an elevation of 7,400 feet. The mountainous land, not extremely rugged, is composed of igneous rocks, with lava the predominant type. Granite and granodiorite form the cores of the mountains with lava and tuff of Tertiary age nearer the surface. The precious metal deposits occur at Aurora in latite beds.

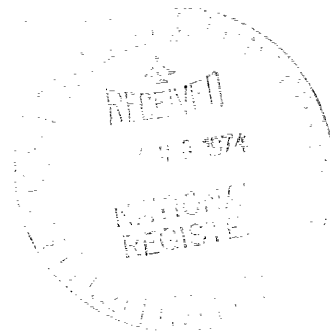
The climate is semi-arid, and sagebrush covers the area including the highest peaks at 10,000 feet. Pinyon and juniper woodland alternates with the sagebrush to cover the lower areas, 6,000 to 8,000 feet, and there are scattered groves of small birch and aspen trees and patches of meadow grass along the mountain streams and around springs.

The town grew up in the gently sloping area where Esmeralda Gulch and Willow Gulch join, northwest of the most productive mines located on Last Chance Hill.

In 1863 Aurora is pictured as a cluster of huts made of stone, sheltered by canvas or tin roofs, with streets of wooden buildings, and many substantial brick structures near the center of town, and uncountable tents and dugouts in the surrounding hills. About 5,000 persons lived in these makeshift shelters and in the 700 houses, and enjoyed the services provided by the hotels, churches, 20 stores, 22 saloons and 16 quartz mills.

For a few years after its decline in 1870 there were about 100 buildings standing intact. Many brick buildings were torn down after World War II for the used brick they contained. Only fallen-down buildings, rubble, foundations, and the cemetery remain in 1972.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>mining</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Although precious metal deposits were found in nearby lower elevations in 1852, gold and silver deposits were first discovered in the Aurora area in August 1860. Within 2 months, prospectors had filed 350 claims. Aurora township was begun in 1861, and votes cast that year totaled 593.

In March 1861, the California State Legislature made Aurora the county seat of Mono County, while Territorial Governor Nye made it Council District 1 under his authority. Later that year, the Nevada Legislature created Esmeralda County with Aurora as the county seat. Because the boundary dispute was not resolved by the next general election in 1863, voters cast ballots at one polling place for California officials and at another for Nevada candidates. Settled by the boundary survey of 1864, Aurora was found to be three miles inside the Nevada border. Aurora remained under Territorial government until October 31, 1864, when Nevada became the 36th state. Esmeralda County was divided in 1911 by the Nevada Legislature and Aurora now lies within the area of Mineral County, created that year.

The big rush to Aurora began in 1862. A temporary army camp, Camp Aurora, was located within one mile of town and occupied by a detachment of soldiers from Fort Churchill, Nevada, to quell disturbances between the settlers and Indians in the Mono Lake and Adobe Meadows regions of California.

By 1863 the town contained 5,000 people including Mark Twain who experimented here, briefly, with a mining career. "Roughing It" contains an account of some of his experiences in Aurora. In 1864 the population grew to 7,000 people, pro-Union in the Civil War dispute. Four newspapers were printed in Aurora.

The rich veins that sustained Aurora were shallow and business slowed by 1864. By 1870 half of Aurora's houses were empty and most of the mills and numerous other buildings had been dismantled and moved away. By 1880 only 500 persons remained, and in 1883 Aurora lost the county seat to Hawthorne.

A large part of Aurora's population moved 10 miles southeast to the then booming town of Bodie, California. By 1879 Bodie had 10,000 residents. Two fires caused the loss of a large part of that town, but it is still one of the best preserved ghost mining towns in the West, and is now a California State Historical Park.

Several partly successful revivals were attempted at Aurora.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Nevada Historical Sites, Mordy, Brooke D. and Donald L. Mc Caughey, Desert Research Institute, University of Nevada, 1968.
 Aurora, DeWitt, Pauline, Tour of the Month article, Nevada Highways and Parks Magazine, Summer, 1965.
 The Early Settlement of Aurora, Nevada and Nearby Mining Camps, Earl W. Kersten, Jr., Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Volume 54, No. 4. December, 1964, pp 490 507.
 Dr. John Schilling, Nevada Bureau of Mines, University of Nevada, Reno.

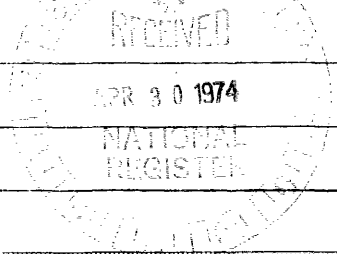
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	38° 17' 39"	118° 54' 08"				
NE	38° 17' 39"	118° 53' 42"				
SE	38° 17' 02"	118° 53' 42"				
SW	38° 17' 02"	118° 54' 08"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 205

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N.A.			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: W. E. Wieprecht, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION: Nevada State Park System DATE: 9-18-72

STREET AND NUMBER: 201 South Fall Street, Nye Building, Room 221

CITY OR TOWN: Carson City STATE: Nevada CODE: 32

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Eric Cronkite

Title: Adm N.S.P.S. & S.H.P.O.

Date: 4-3-74

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

Al Mortensen
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 7/30/74

ATTEST:

W. J. Smustag
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 7-26-74

SW 11/335 576/4238800
 SE 11/334240/4238800 NW 11/335676/4238800
 SW 11/334250/4240000
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Nevada	
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8. SIGNIFICANCE

Statement of Significance (continued)

Between 1880 and 1892 claims were worked on Last Chance Hill, and between 1914 and 1918 there was relatively extensive activity in the area.

Of the over \$30 million produced by the area's mines, however, only \$2 million was recorded after 1869. Aurora was one of the most important early precious metal mining camps in Nevada.

The discovery, growth and regional economic influence of these camps promoted agricultural settlement, and the development of roads and railroads. In the fall of 1859, one year before discovery of Aurora, the first settlements were made in Mason and Smith Valleys in Nevada, and by the next year, settlements had been made in Big Meadows in California. As the mining towns prospered, further agricultural settlement was stimulated. Transportation lines, ranches, sawmills and stage and freight lines were needed by the mining town. The Esmeralda Toll Road from Aurora, 70 miles northwest, to Carson Valley was of major importance in obtaining supplies when heavy snow cut off travel over the nearer and higher mountain passes.

The early mining period ended about 1890 when the rich deposits had been exhausted, but farming and ranching activities begun at that time continue to advance Nevada's economy today. Some stage and freight stops on early day toll roads remain as community trade centers, and the roads themselves form a portion of California and Nevada highways and county road systems.

Aurora and her neighboring mining settlements exerted a deep and lasting influence on western Great Basin settlement and transport patterns.

