HORSE AND CARRIAGE DAYS IN AURORA
In the days of horse transportation every village needed facilities for carriage making and repair, blacksmithing and livery (horse rental and boarding).

In Aurora, from just after the Civil War until the start of the automobile era, Maurice Polhamus (1840-1913) provided these essential services.

Farm buggy, 1880-1900, and famed stud “Black Hawk Hero” from Bill Hecht’s rootsweb/springport site. Gould’s farm was on Sherwood Rd.
“MAURICE POLHAMUS… was born in Battle Creek, Mich., in 1840, and after the death of his father, his mother came with her family to Cayuga County in 1848. He was married to Miss Catherine A. Brightman in 1866. Their family consists of five children. Mr. Polhamus is a blacksmith and carriage maker, and established himself in business in Aurora in 1865….”
The Polhamus carriage factory and blacksmith shop stood in the original business district, at the corner of Dublin Hill Rd. and Main St.

**POLHAMUS & CO. 1875 (ABOVE) AND 1904 (RIGHT).**
The house was a store and wheelwright’s shop before becoming the carriage factory. The main shop (open door, left and below) is behind the house.

The factory complex also included a smaller building bridging the creek (center of photo to right). It is no longer standing.
The shop retains many reminders of its use as a carriage factory (clockwise from above): large doors for vehicles of every size, racks for overhead wood storage and the blacksmith’s forge.
The well-worn carpenter’s bench (upper left) has holes for clamps (lower left).

Some hand-forged hardware also remains (below).
The Campbell Carriage Factory in New Brunswick belongs to the same era as Polhamus & Co. The overhead storage, long carpenter’s bench (rear of photo below) and forge are all similar.
Carriage shops changed with the times. A photograph of the Boyertown Carriage Factory (Bucks County, PA) shows workers repairing a wheel rim in a similar shop around 1900: note electric light. Polhamus & Co. continued to flourish through this era.
In addition to the shop, Maurice Polhamus kept livery stables on Cherry Ave. (at the lot entering Oak Glen Cemetery) and in Ledyard.

His enterprises prospered and he was able to build a house across from his factory (1874). This house, with a porch and rear addition (1900), is now the Rectory for Good Shepherd Catholic Community.
Maurice Polhamus later bought two farms, Blooming Meadows (on Sands Rd.) and Fall Brook on Dublin Hill Rd.

“FALL BROOK FARM is another fine property of fifty-nine acres, owned by Maurice Polhamus. Postoffice address, Aurora, N. Y. It joins the village of Aurora on the east, and is devoted to the raising of fruits and vegetables, with a ten acre peach orchard as well as the cultivation of small fruits.”

From “THE MOST VALUABLE AND PRODUCTIVE FARMS” IN THE NEW CENTURY ATLAS OF CAYUGA COUNTY, NEW YORK - 1904
Horse and carriage days are long past, but Maurice Polhamus’ great-great-great-grandsons continue to supply fruits and vegetables to the Aurora community.

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