



The Aurora Colony Visitors

Association (AuroraColony.com)

welcomes you to the City of

Aurora and its businesses.

Antique stores first came to

Aurora in 1959 and today it

is widely known as Oregon's

Antiques Capital.

Visitors will also enjoy

trendy boutiques, charming

cafes and free parking.

Walk WITH EMMMA

YOUR Self-Guided Tour
of Historic AURORA

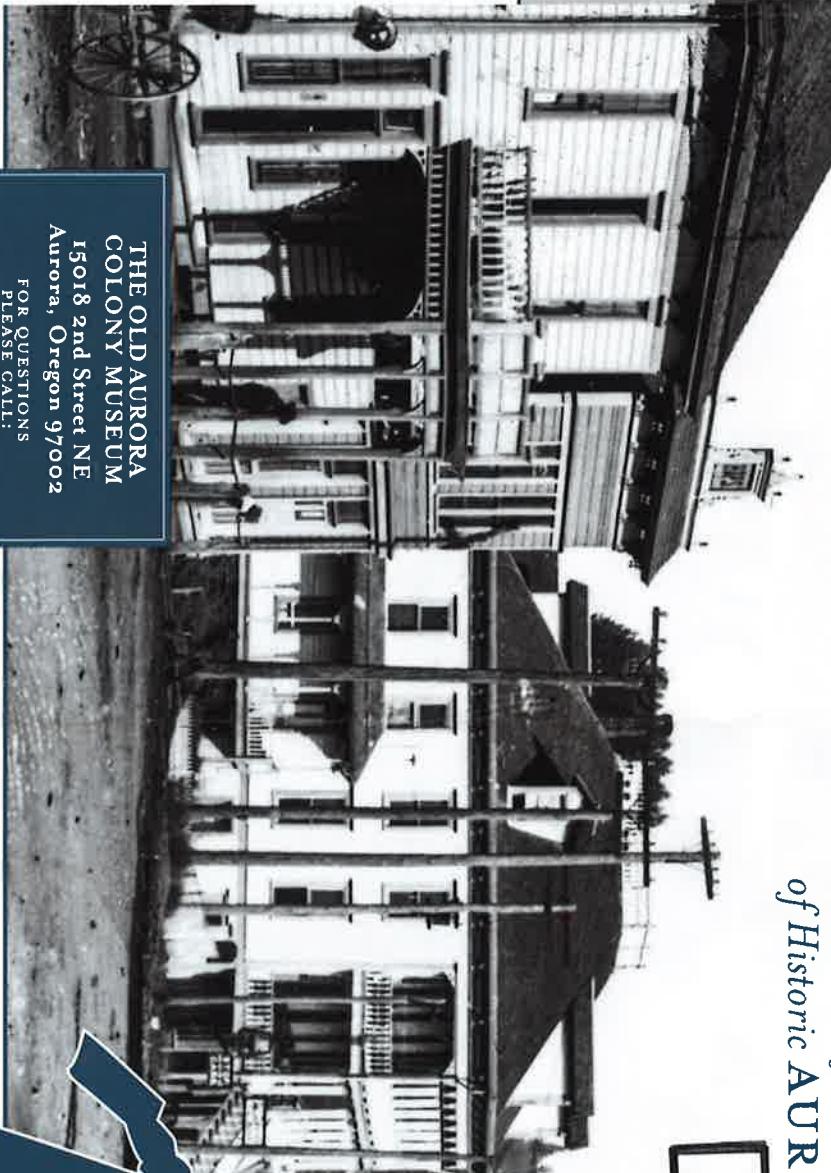
From the Desk of
Sister
Sallie Hassell

WHERE SHOULD I START?

We suggest that you begin your walking tour at the *Old Aurora Colony Museum* on the corner of 2nd and Liberty Street. The museum staff can get you started or simply follow the guide.

This easy walking tour takes you to the downtown area and covers approximately four square blocks of the Aurora Colony National Historic District. You will not only learn about Emma's house but also many other colony era houses, commercial buildings and important sites of former colony enterprises.

Most of the remaining buildings are currently used as businesses and open for viewing; **interiors of museum buildings and private homes are not included on this tour.** There is another *Old Aurora Colony Museum* tour which guides visitors through Emma's house, as well as the interiors of three other colony buildings.



THE OLD AURORA
COLONY MUSEUM
15018 2nd Street NE
Aurora, Oregon 97002
FOR QUESTIONS
PLEASE CALL:
(503) 678-5754

Open Tuesday through Sunday February through December.
Closed Mondays, January and major holidays.



AuroraColony.org



Old Aurora Colony
Preserving the Past for the Future

Emma GIESY

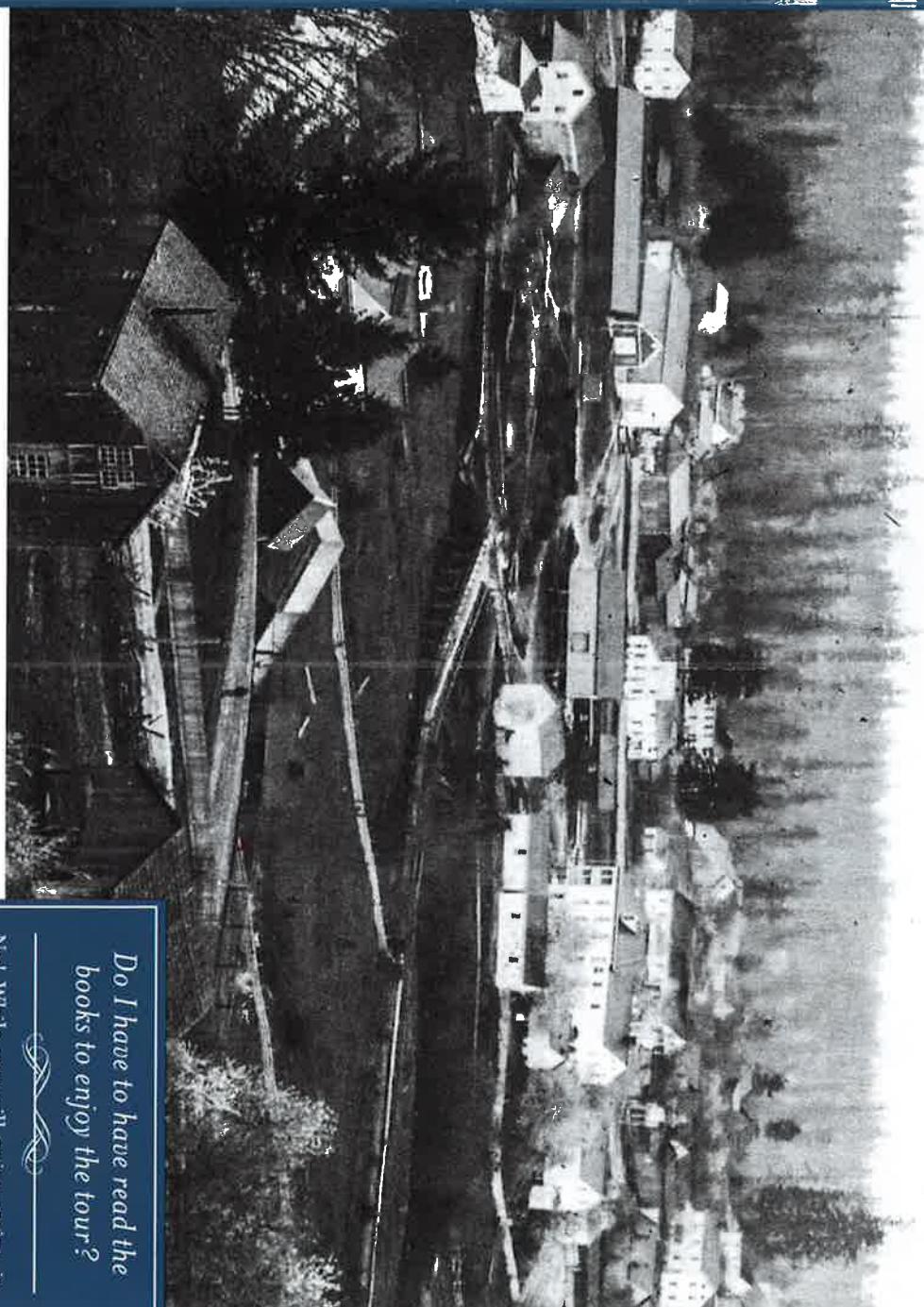


Is best known today as the heroine of three novels by author Jane Kirkpatrick. These fascinating stories are based on the real-life Emma Wagner Giesy (1833-1916) who, at age 19 accompanied her husband Christian and eight other men on a 2000 mile overland journey to search out a new home site for Dr. Wilhelm Keil's Christian communal colony that was then solely located at Bethel, Missouri.

Emma's personal story has had Jane's readers spellbound as she endures the rigors of this journey and her new life in the Pacific Northwest.

Jane Kirkpatrick's research for her "Change and Cherish" books featuring Emma Giesy was drawn from original family letters and other primary records found in the archives of the Old Aurora Colony Museum and other repositories. The colony museum also possesses a number of personal items associated with Emma including her sewing machine and several of her quilts. You are encouraged to also take the variety of other museum tours offered that shed light on Emma and the rest of the Aurora Colony.

WHY IS EMMA'S AURORA UNIQUE?



Do I have to have read the books to enjoy the tour?

No! While you will enjoy seeing in person those items and sites mentioned in the books, the tour will be fun for those unfamiliar with both Aurora and Emma.

designation and it allows for the protection and preservation of areas deemed significant to American history. Aurora was the most significant communal society that existed West of the Rocky Mountains in nineteenth century America.

The Aurora Colony, a German Christian communal society, lasted from 1856 to 1883. The Aurora Colony history has been preserved by the Aurora Colony Historical Society since 1963.

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WELCOME TO THE EMMA WALK

I am so pleased that you are joining me today! Please pay attention to all of the crosswalks and traffic signals. These are all new, of course, but very much necessary since Aurora is now such a busy place.



Notice our Blue Painted Benches



These are reproductions of the colony style. The bench project was sponsored by the City of Aurora and the Oregon Department of Transportation and they were funded as memorials to loved ones and in tribute to community volunteers.

The Colonists often painted benches in a variety of colors but blue was our favorite. The village furniture was often painted this "Prussian" or Aurora Blue.

You are welcome to sit on them!

Although Aurora has changed since I first moved here in 1862, change was always taking place here. Even in my day, houses and buildings were being moved, or lost to time or tragedy. But I can still recognize the bones of the old town. Since I died in 1916 I have to rely on others for what happened here after that year.

Shop owners in the historic district may also have some of my "Emma" stories to share with you. Don't be afraid to test their knowledge!



I COULD GO ON BUT WE MUST START OUR TOUR...

1

EMMA'S HOUSE

(The George and Elizabeth Kraus House)

Of course, our tour starts on the sidewalk in front of my house. The museum has another tour that takes visitors inside as well. My brother Johnathan built this house for me and my children in 1874. I lived here with my two daughters until 1881.

From the street you can see the two front doors that lead into the two separate rooms on the ground floor. I am very proud of these two doors! I hear that visitors now come from all over the world to see my house. This pleases me.

Jane Kirkpatrick tells it accurately when she describes my negotiations with Dr. Keil,

"I imagined my house. It would be a double house. It would have two entrances at the front and two fireplaces down. The stairs would be enclosed so people could sit in the parlor while others went upstairs or down, no one being the wiser. Upstairs there'd be bedrooms on either side of the stairwell and a hall with enough room to allow trundle beds or cribs for toddlers. There'd be back and front covered porches. And I wanted glass windows to let the light in."

It is important to remember that the George and Elizabeth Giese Kraus family lived in this same house from 1881 to 1967. In 1969 the Kraus family donated the house to the Aurora Colony Historical Society and it was moved from the original site to become part of the new museum complex.

Let's walk back to the museum which was first built as the Ox Barn.

2

OX BARN (1862)

It was a very exciting day when 250 colonists arrived at Aurora from Bethel, Missouri in October of 1863. An ox barn had been built to house the animals that pulled the wagons over the Oregon Trail. We industrious and wise Germans kept our oxen, cattle and horses in barns. The ox barn contained a lower floor for the animals and a hay loft above. The oxen cleared the village site of trees and underbrush. To give you an idea of the work involved the butcher Michael Rapps remembered that, *"We either had to kill a deer or fell a tree before breakfast."*

George Wolfer was so startled by the wilderness that he asked Henry Fry, *"When do we get to Aurora?"* "Oh George," Henry told him, *"You're right in the middle of Aurora."* The primitive nature of the village rendered George speechless.

After Dr. Keil died the ox barn was converted to a home and a general store. In the twentieth century Ezra Hurst employed the building as a truck transfer station for delivering vegetables to the valley from Portland.

In 1966 it was renovated and opened as the Ox Barn Museum by the Aurora Colony Historical Society. The museum name was changed to The Old Aurora Colony Museum in 1988.

Follow me straight across Liberty Street to the brick building.

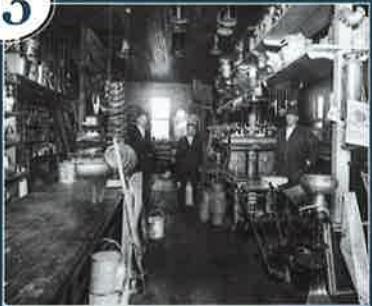
EMMA'S WALKING TOUR CONTINUED ►

Go inside and view the newer design elements including the beautiful fireplace. Besides being an antique store this building also once featured a gracious and famous restaurant known as the Aurora Colony Inn.

On this very spot once stood his father William Fry's blacksmith shop. There was always an ever present pile of firewood in the street out in front of it.

Now look across Main Street to that empty space left of the parking lot.

13



AURORA COLONY DRUGSTORE SITE

The original Aurora Colony Drugstore was located here until it was torn down in 1962. I know that some of the artifacts from the drugstore are part of a permanent exhibit at the museum.

My son, Andrew Jackson, lived there with Dr. Martin Giesy while learning to become a doctor. I missed having him at home with me but Andrew became a famous doctor and so it was worth it to him. Almost a whole block of small Main Street shops once constituted Aurora's 19th and early 20th century shopping districts. This was a busy little street.

Turn and go on to the garden bordered sidewalk leading back to the Jacob Miley Log House behind Walter Fry's place.

14

JACOB MILEY LOG HOUSE

You wouldn't guess that this is a log house by looking at its current siding but once inside you will see the original log construction. It was built by Jacob Miley in 1867 near the Willamette River; part of the Colony's commonly held 18,000 acres of land. One of three surviving Colony log buildings it was moved here in 1990.

Some prefer the rustic beauty of a log house. As for me, I was determined to never again live in one after my experience at Willapa, Washington.

Let's take the brick path in front of the Miley house to the park area. You may wish a brief stop at the public restrooms. These were funded in part by our local Marion County Commissioners and by proceeds from Aurora's Historic Oregon Trail wagon train trip in 1993. That wagon is on display at the Old Aurora Colony Museum.

15

DOWNTOWN PARK AREA

Aurora has a history of being accommodating to its visitors. During my time we had a community park of nearly a dozen acres for Sunday assemblies with buildings for eating and dancing, and a kitchen with bake ovens large enough to cook a meal for the whole community. In August this area is the center for village festivities during Aurora Colony Days.

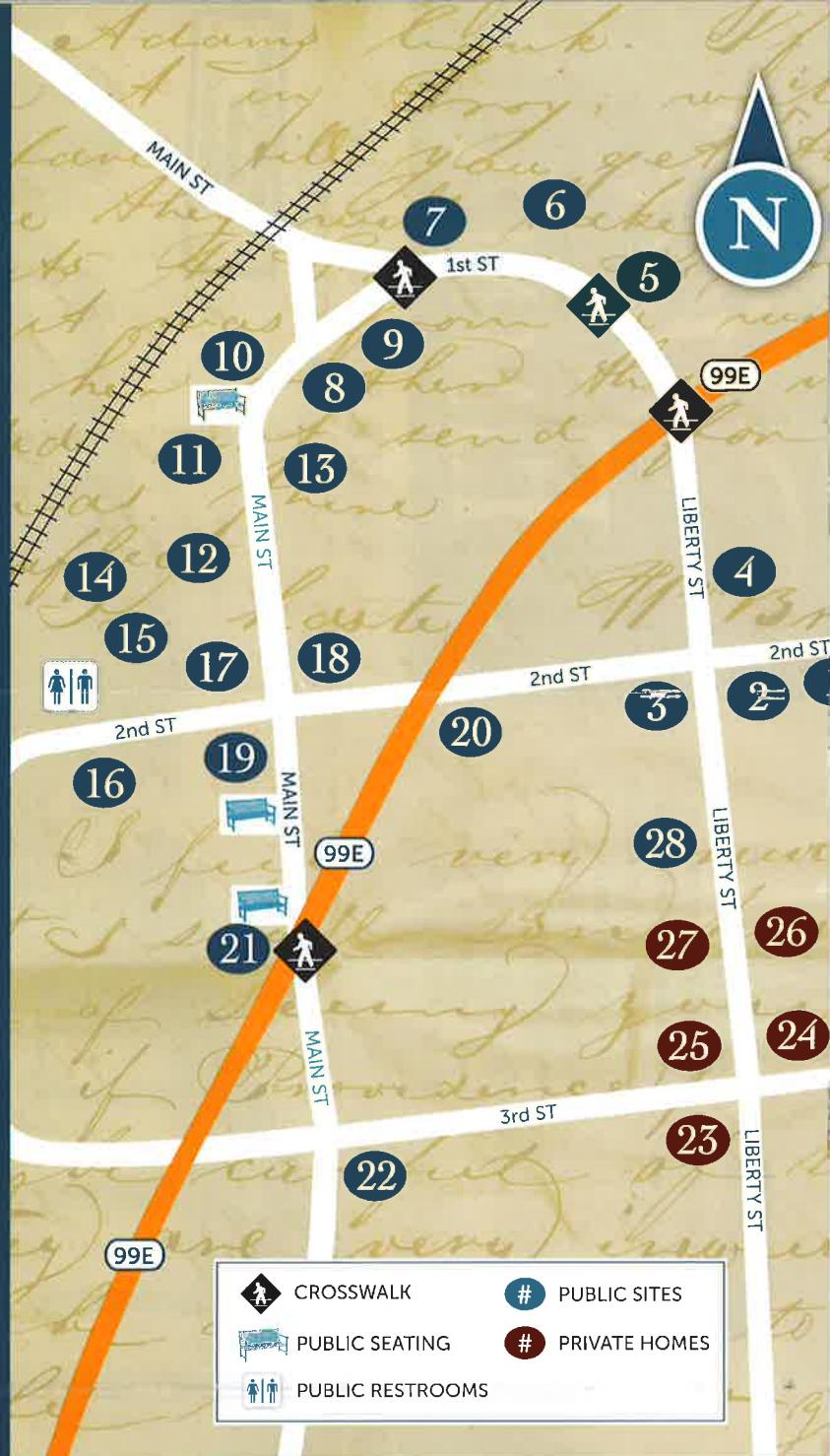
Look across the hedge at the Octagon Building.

16

THE OCTAGON BUILDING

This is the only surviving building from the original Pioneer Hotel complex. It was moved here in 1983 and restored. Octagon buildings were once considered the most efficient use of space and were fashionable to build in the nineteenth century. While the use of the building remains a mystery to these modern folks I know that it was used for a variety of things. I saw chickens in it and I also remember that the band members would retreat there to smoke their pipes.

Turn and walk back to Main Street along the concrete path where we come to the William Fry house on the corner.



Brochure design and layout by Krake Designs | www.krakedesigns.com

17

WILLIAM FRY HOUSE

William Fry was the colony's blacksmith. He built this house in 1874 when he married Annie Miller. Known as "Boss" Fry for his authoritative and knowledgeable manner, he could fashion anything out of iron. I knew "Aunt Annie" quite well. Annie was good to my children and so I spent quite a lot of time inside of Annie's house. I loved to watch the raindrops splash against the wavy glass upstairs windows. I suppose because I had lived at Willapa I came to love the rain. You are welcome to go inside and look out the windows and imagine a bustling Main Street, often muddy or dusty, with its wooden sidewalks.

Some people see similarities between my house and this one. Both houses were originally located on corners and close to the street. They both have a gable roof, boxed eaves and interior chimneys. But, this siding is different and the Fry house has more windows. And my house? It is the only one with two front doors!

Let's cross the street here to look in the windows of the Main Street Mercantile.

18

WILL-SNYDER STORE

Built in 1912 as the Will-Snyder store, the building is over one hundred years old. It now has red painted pillars and blue awnings. This was one of several stores that were owned and managed by the children of former colony members. It is still a mercantile center for antique enthusiasts.

Return back to the William Fry house corner and proceed left to the white-pillared store where the Aurora Colony sold goods to the public.

19

WM. KEIL AND COMPANY STORE

Wm. Keil and Company was the business name for our general country store that catered to the trade of some of the mid-valley's best known pioneers by cash or barter. The store inventory included necessities of life not produced by colony domestics or craftsmen. John and Fred Giesy, two of my husband Christian's brothers, managed the store business. The men and the families had their own ledger pages but for a long time I was the only woman who had such a page. Hah! The current business owners will also be happy to let you peruse their stock of goods. The roomy second floor was the home quarters for the Colony's Pioneer Band.

Just ahead you will see another blue bench that provides a perfect place for a rest.

20

AURORA COLONY STORE

The colony's other store filled up most of the space now in the path of Highway 99 East. Colony Members came to this store to freely receive colony made materials such as shoes, baskets, furniture, and a variety of clothing and textiles. As you can see from



the picture it was a very large building. It was torn down in 1931 to make way for the path of Highway 99 East that cut a swath through the village grid.

Now walk to the next blue bench just where Main Street meets up with 99 East. This provides an excellent vantage point for looking down towards the railroad to see the original width of the street.

21

HIGHWAY 99 EAST



MAIN STREET c.1908. You can see the Wm. Keil store and the William Fry house to the left."

Now carefully cross Highway 99 East in the cross walk and walk up to the corner on Third Street. The American Legion Building is on your left. Across the street is the original site of my house.

22

ORIGINAL SITE OF EMMA'S HOUSE (George Kraus House)

After the Kraus family donated our house in 1969 it was moved to the museum from this corner. In 1974 the Bank of Oregon built a branch here—thus the drive-up window on the left side. Across the street in the now empty lot was George Kraus' shoe shop and later the big Sadler-Kraus store which burned in 1990. If I linger here too long you will see my eyes fill with tears.

So walk quickly left from here on 3rd Street towards the Charles Snyder House and stop at its corner on Liberty Street.

23

CHARLES SNYDER HOUSE

Charles and Christina Snyder were my very good friends. Their colony era home sits on a corner like the others and it has been restored by a series of dedicated owners.

As we cross the street let's stop in front of the large black walnut tree. It is at least one hundred and fifty years old. Starting from here we will take some time to look at four houses built by the children of the Colonists after the colony ended in 1883.

24

CHRISTIAN ZIMMERMAN HOUSE

The Christian Zimmerman house dates to 1883. Christian was one of the colony's best carpenters. An original Aurora Colony washhouse and a barn are still located behind it near the bank overlooking the Pudding River.

25

ANTON WILL HOUSE

Anton Will built this house directly across from the Zimmerman's for his wife Anna in 1899. For a time Anton was in a mercantile business with his cousin Andrew Snyder that was located in the Will-Snyder Store. You saw that building earlier on Main Street.

26

HENRY KRAUS HOUSE

Next to the Zimmerman house is the Henry Kraus house. Henry was the shoemaker George's younger brother. I knew Henry's wife Christina quite well. I especially appreciated her beautiful singing voice. The Kraus' were storekeepers and carpenters. The very grand style of this house is probably due to the fact that Henry was one of the colony's most accomplished carpenters.

27

LEONARD WILL HOUSE

Leonard Will was a butcher in the colony. His wife Triphena Forstner Will made some of the colony's finest quilts. Their original house was converted to the offices of the Aurora Observer newspaper in 1908 and this more modern house was then built for them. It was later known as the Will Sisters house as it was lived in by two sisters and their cousin all of whom remained unmarried.

28

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (1911)

The Aurora Colony was a non-denominational Christian Communal Society. The colonists built their own church in 1867 but it was not attended after the colony ended and so the building was torn down in 1911. The Presbyterians and the Lutherans both came to Aurora in the later nineteenth century and eventually constructed their own churches. This 1911 Presbyterian Church has some of the original pews from the colony church.

We have now arrived back at the Ox Barn. Thank you for walking the streets of Aurora and sharing this day with me.

Emma GIESY



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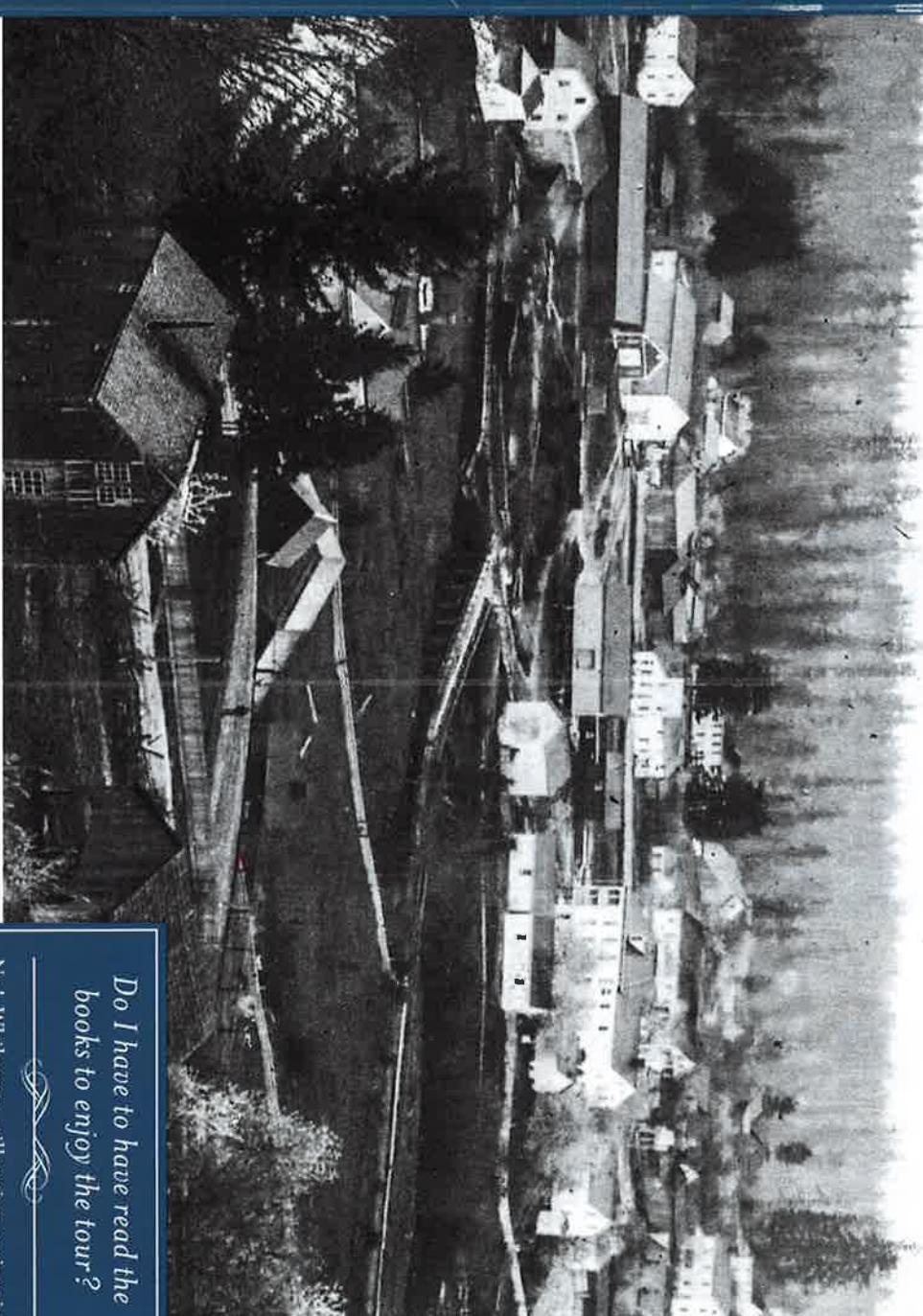
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OPEN TO CONTINUE EMMA'S WALKING TOUR ▼