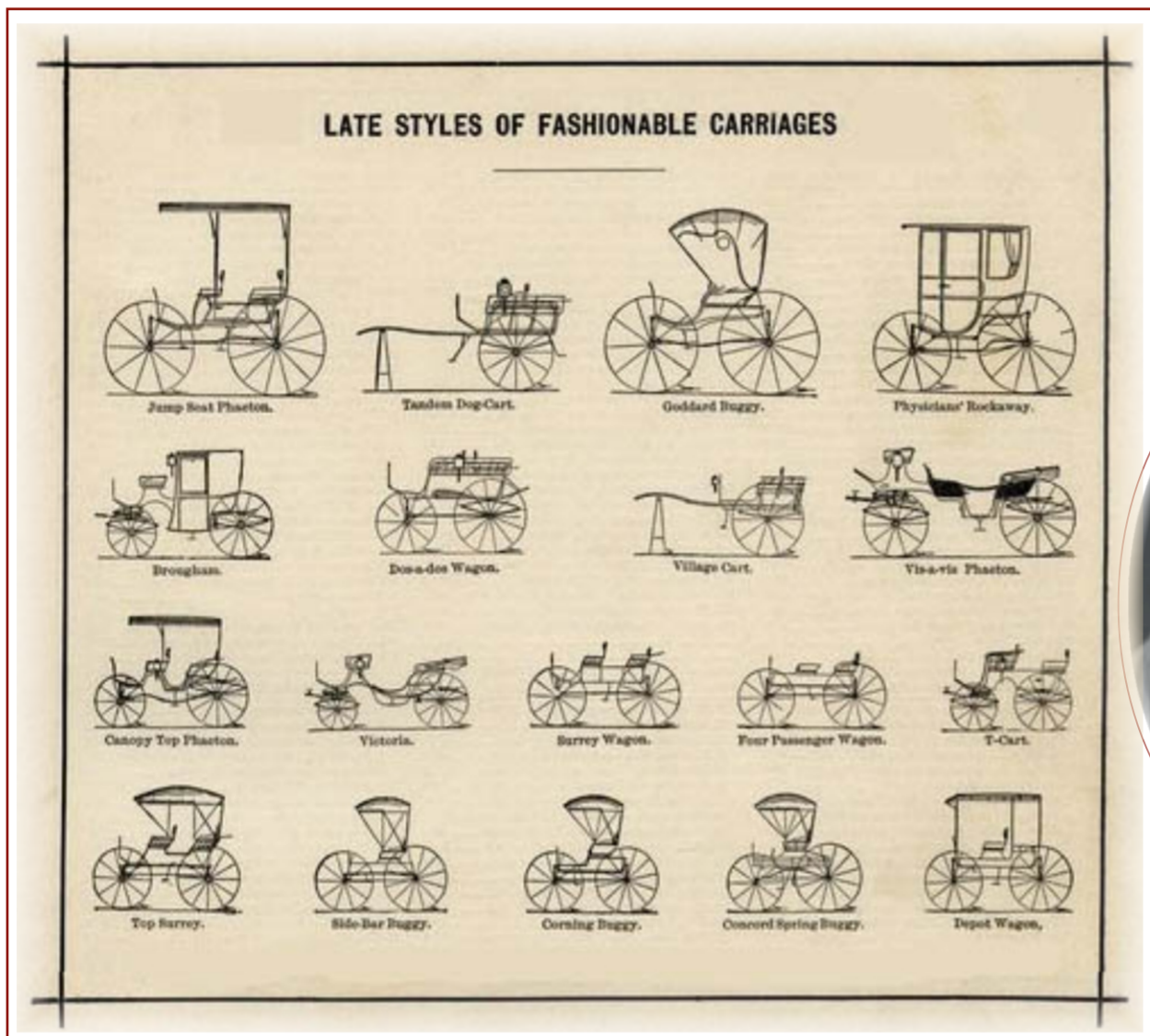


Don't Put the Cart Before the Horse!

A few of the many names by which carriages, buggies and carts were called! How many have you heard of?

BROUGHAM, BUCKBOARD, BUGGY, CAB, CANOPY-TOP, CARRIAGE, CART, COACH, CONCORD STAGE, COVERED WAGON, DAYTON, DELIVERY WAGON, DEMOCRAT WAGON, DOG CART, DOUBLE BUGGY, DRAY, EXPRESS WAGON, FARM WAGON, FREIGHT WAGON, GIG, HACK, HACKNEY, HEARSE, HOOVER BUGGY, HORSE AND BUGGY, JENNY LIND, JITNEY, JUMPER, LIGHT WAGON, LIVERY RIG, LUMBER WAGON, MILK WAGON, MULE WAGON, NO-TOP BUGGY, OMNIBUS, ONE-HORSE SHAY, OX CART, PHAETON, PONY CART, RIG, RUNABOUT, SHAY, SPINDLE WAGON, SPRING BOARD, STAGECOACH, STANHOPE, SULKY, SURREY, TALLYHO, TAXI, TRAP, TWO-WHEEL CART, VICTORIA, WAGON, YORK CARRIAGE



Carriage Making in the United States

The harness making, blacksmithing and carriage making trades worked hand-in-hand combining technologies to provide cheap, reliable, horse-powered transportation for many people in the late 19th Century.

As the population grew, so did the manufacturing capacity of the country. What were once considered to be luxuries became everyday items. Carriages are a good example of this, as they were considered items meant only for the very wealthy around 1850, yet by 1900, were common in all households but the very poor.

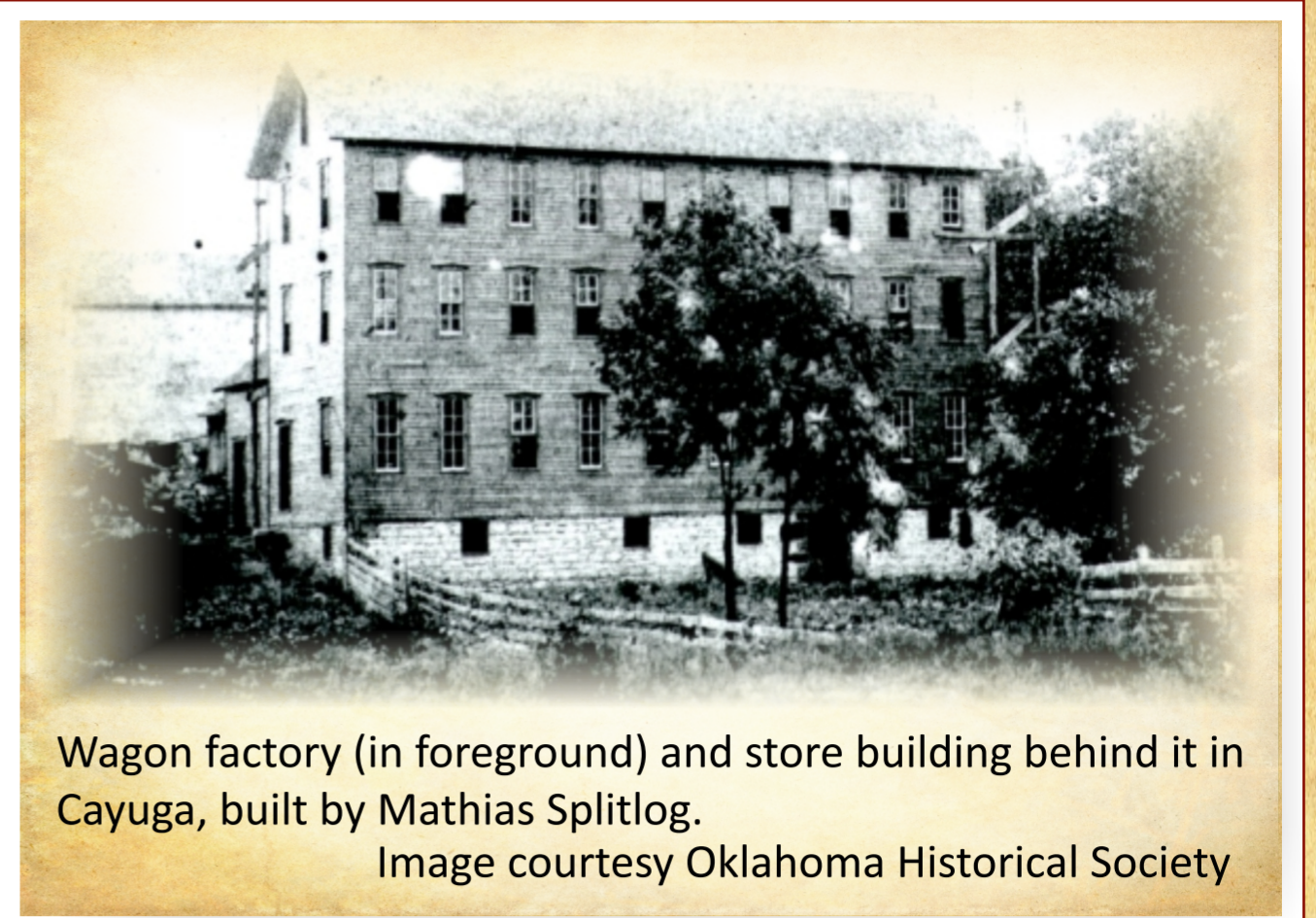
Farmers had their heavy work wagons, but not until carriages were mass-produced and affordably priced, did carriage ownership become wide-spread.



Carriage manufacturers were among the first to standardize parts, use specialized labor, and develop modern manufacturing practices. This increased the production of carriages, while reducing the prices significantly, until in 1900, a new carriage could be bought for \$30.50 through the Sears catalogue.

Carriage-related industries, such as blacksmithing, harness making, and painting expanded with the number of carriages on the roads. Horses needed to be shod, wheels repaired, broken springs replaced, old carriages repainted, and broken harness repaired and local businesses expanded to provide these services. Of course, then as now, farmers (and most people were farmers) were able to do much of the simple repair work themselves.

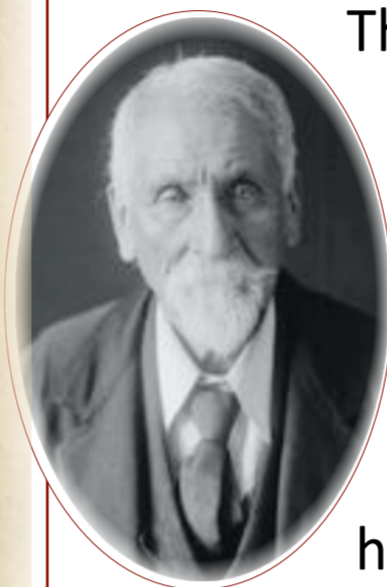
The growing popularity of carriage ownership was concentrated in the country for several simple reasons. The major reason was the availability of space. Most city residents, even if they could afford a horse and carriage did not have the space to stable their horse and carriage, or a pasture for the horse. By the turn of the century, used carriages could be bought for \$5; the real limit on carriage use being the expense and trouble of owning a horse. Most farmers had horses on their farm and most grew their own animal feed and had barns already to house a driving horse. This easy access to horses combined with the greater distances between businesses in rural areas, encouraged carriage ownership in the country while the same factors discouraged it in urban areas.



Wagon factory (in foreground) and store building behind it in Cayuga, built by Mathias Splitlog.
Image courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society

Carriage Making in Delaware County

There were many stories of Dyut-Ru-Tu Re aka Self-Made Splitlog, aka Mathias Splitlog, the "millionaire Indian."



In 1843 Splitlog, along with about 800 members of the Ohio Wyandotte tribe, migrated to Kansas—a movement as harsh as the more publicized "Trail of Tears" relocating the Cherokees.

Although he could neither read nor write Matthias spoke 7 languages and was a mechanical genius. He built the first grist mill in Kansas, and in 1860 he constructed a steamboat to carry freight to small settlements on the river. During the early stages of the Civil War he enlisted in the Union Army and ferried materials on the river until he was captured by Confederates, paroled and returned to Westport. In 1863, the Union Pacific Railroad was under construction and crossed a portion of his land near the river. Ever the shrewd businessman he was paid what was termed a "fabulous" sum of money for the right of way and the location of railroad shops.

By this time, because of broken treaty promises in Kansas, most of the Wyandotte tribe had removed to Indian Territory to a section of land provided by the Seneca Tribe as repayment for an old debt. Splitlog decided to join them, and in 1874 chose a location on Cowskin Prairie by the Elk River and Carr Branch Creek.

The town that he built came to be known as Cayuga Springs. He first constructed a saw mill, then a grist mill and soon a general store followed, all of which provided employment for local citizens. He added a blacksmith shop and a three-story factory for the manufacture of buggies and two-seated hacks.

Realizing the abundance of native material that was here and planning for the future, Splitlog planned and built a large factory building. It consisted of a basement and three stories. In the basement was housed the powerplant and the heavy machinery and some of the power was on the second floor but the third was reserved for supplies. All of the wooden parts for the vehicles came from Splitlog's own sawmill.

The village of Cayuga prospered for many years, but after the death of Mathias Splitlog, the wagon factory closed and most of the people in the community moved away.

Here we made buggies, top buggies and two-seated hacks, but no wagons. We had a carriage painter. The [metal carriage] plates were struck but never put on the buggies. I put the boxing on the wheels.

In connection with the factory there were two big lumber barns where the timber was used in the factory building was stored and cured. We also had a large well-equipped blacksmith shop.

Alex, son of Mathias Splitlog, Cayuga



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