First Frame Building Erected.
CHAPTER II.

A GLIMPSE OF THE VILLAGE.

Having found employment here, let us take a look at the settlement as he found it and remembers it at that time.

An unbroken forest covered the land in all directions. The two rivers, then as now, after winding through miles of country, formed a juncture and found a common outlet. It was at the junction of these two rivers that the settlement known as Two Rivers had been founded.

The population at that time (1848) probably did not exceed 200 souls all told. On what is now known as the south side there were no buildings of any kind, with the exception of a single fish shanty, located on the present site of the Two Rivers Coal Company docks, inhabited by a fisherman who was known by the name of John "Sixty."

There were no buildings on the east or French side with the possible exception of a fish shanty or two at the beach.

The settlement or village really began at the eastern end of Main Street, and occupied the space between that street and the river south of Main Street, and extended at the farthest as far west as the present site of the plant of the Aluminum Mfg. Co. That portion nearest the river from Main Street to Washington Street bridge had the most of the population. Dense forests and underbrush encircled the settlement on all sides—all of the east, west and north being an unbroken wilderness. To the north the forests stood in their original grandeur, beginning about where the Eggers Veneer Works now are, stretching in a southwesterly direction across the present site of St. Luke’s Catholic Church, and thence following a line to the present Monroe Street bridge. Back of this imaginary line was wild country covered with forests, with
a few trails that had been blazed through it, and here and there a solitary settler endeavoring by clearing away the timber and brush, to establish a farm. Timber being so plentiful and saw mills so few, little or nothing could be had for the cutting and hauling of them, and thousands of feet were burned by the early settlers in order to hasten the clearing. So dense were the forests here at that time right within what is the very heart of the city today, that an incident which actually occurred at that time will prove interesting. Henry Hempke, a newcomer here, purchased a tract of land one day from H. H. Smith & Company, for the purpose of building thereon a home. This tract included the present site of the home of Joseph Schroeder on the corner of Pine and Jefferson Streets. Mr. Hempke having been assigned the location by Mr. Smith, began clearing away the timber at once. Returning to the settlement after the first day's labor, he set out the second day to resume clearing, but so dense was the forest and brush, that notwithstanding his efforts, he was unable to locate the place he had started to clear the previous day, and he was therefore obliged to return and have H. H. Smith go with him a second time to locate the land he had purchased. All this only a little over 50 years ago.

Most of the buildings were one-story board structures, better known as shanties, although there were also a number of log houses. Among the settlers here at that time were H. H. Smith, of the firm of H. H. Smith & Co., who conducted a general store, having in stock such goods as would be apt to find sale in a frontier community, including a stock of drugs. This firm also operated a saw mill on a site on the northern bank of the Neshoto River, a few feet west of Washington Street bridge. This old mill was a familiar land mark until destroyed by fire a few years ago. The store was located on the site of the present premises of the Two Rivers Mercantile Company. The old store building was later on purchased by
Carl Saubert and removed to his premises, where it still stands, and is at present utilized as a saloon and boarding house by Ira Levenhagen.

Mr. L. S. House at that time conducted a boarding house known as the Two Rivers house, on the present site of the home of Mrs. Urban Niquette. Adolph Lemere had a boarding house in the old building still standing and owned by the Lemere estate. This building was the first frame building erected here. Sebastian Boldus also had a boarding house on the site now occupied by the residence of F. Kaufman and John Schrade on Main Street. Mr. Kuehn conducted a small store on the southwest corner of Jefferson Street and Smith Avenue. Jos. Fisher did a little tailoring in the building that stood on the bank of the river at the intersection of Main and West Water Streets. Others here at that time engaged in various pursuits were Joseph Gagnon, Oliver Pilon, Oliver Alonzo, Anton Cayo, Frank Alonzo.