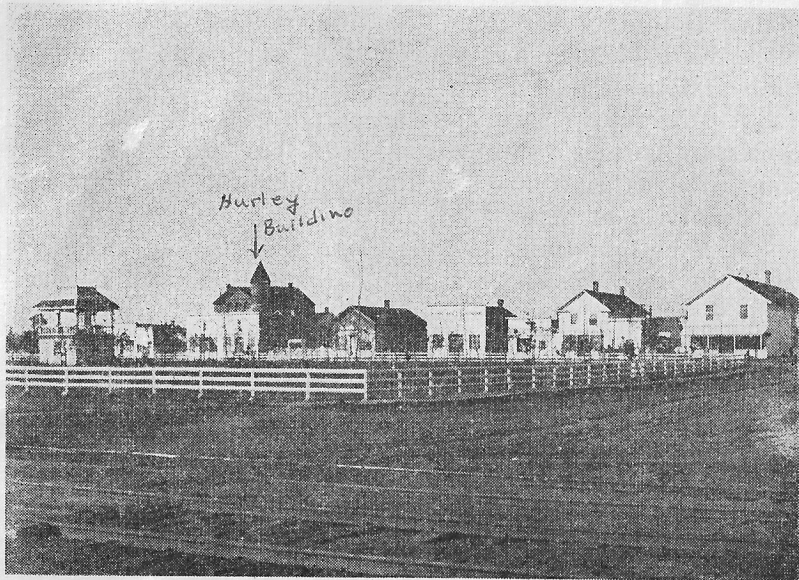
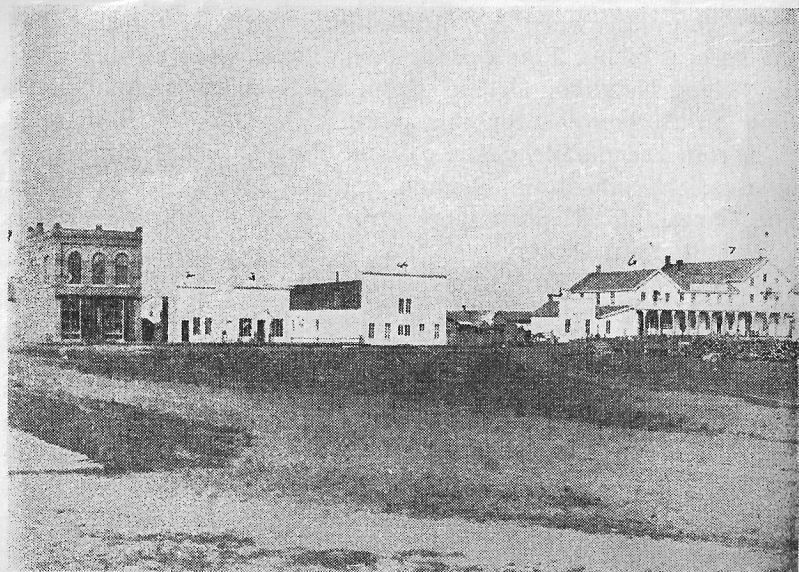


*One Hundred Years
In Pine County*

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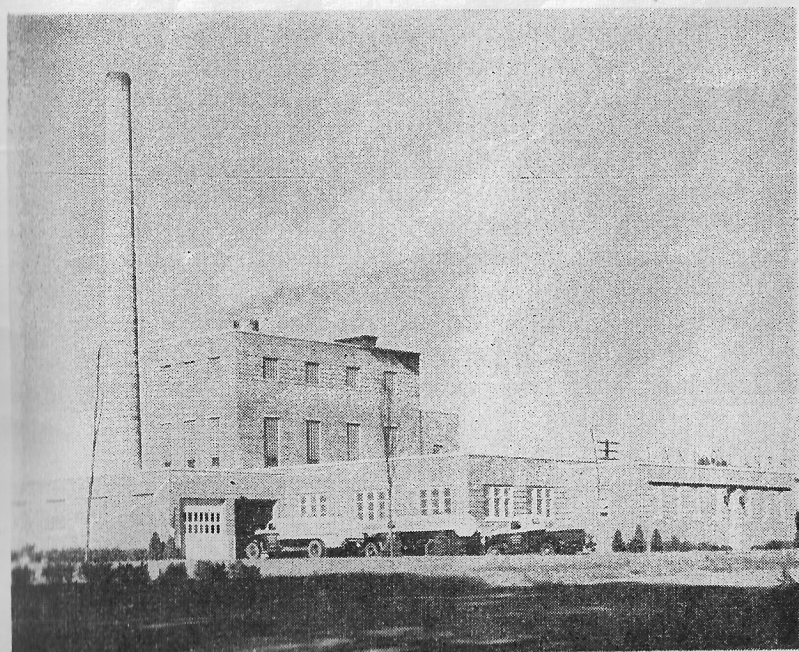
MAIN STREET AND THE ROBINSON PARK, PINE CITY—1890



MAIN STREET NORTH FROM THE HURLEY BUILDING—1890



THE COURT HOUSE—PINE CITY



LAND O'LAKES DRYING PLANT—PINE CITY

PINE CITY

"Dark behind it rose the forest:
Rose the dark and shimmering fir trees:
Rose the pines with cones upon them."

And at the point where Snake river leaves Cross lake, a rare phenomenon of nature in itself, the little village of Chengwatana, meaning town of pines in Ojibway tongue, took its beginning.

From earliest days it had been the site of an Indian village, a rallying place for Indians and traders because of the junction of the two waterways.

When the government built the old post road from St. Paul to the head of the lakes, this point became a stopping place for stagecoaches carrying passengers and postriders with the mail.

Before 1836 the first whites here had been those who established trading posts on Pokegama and Cross lakes. Several of these had been built even before Fort Snelling, since the traders came in from Canada, down the St. Croix and Snake rivers, on their treks inland for furs. With the new road came more white men, among them missionaries to teach Christianity to the Indians. One of these, a Reverend Ayers, is credited with bringing in the first printing form to print the Bible in the Indian language.

Soon after the establishment of the missions, the Indians sold all their lands between the Mississippi and the St. Croix to the government and were moved onto reservations, so the missions were abandoned.

Lured by the fur trade and the rich forest products, the whites stayed on and yet when Pine county was organized on March 31, 1856, two years before the state was organized, there were less than a hundred people here and Chengwatana became the county seat. Perhaps because they were a handful of whites surrounded by Indians, the little community was conscious of the necessity of law, and since "with law can a land be built, with lawlessness destroyed," peace officers were appointed. Among the first of these was Ferdinand Blank, a Swiss soldier of fortune and a former member of the French Foreign Legion of North Africa, who had come into the county in 1861. He is credited with having

established the first garden in Pine City at the site of the present W. S. McEachern residence. Later James MacLaughlin was sheriff for many years to be succeeded by his son-in-law, the late R. J. Hawley, who served until his death in 1927.

In 1869, when the St. Paul and Duluth railroad built its line from the Twin Cities to the Twin Ports, the town was moved to its present location to take advantage of this faster mode of transportation. The new little village was called Pine City, the English translation of Chengwatana. Two of the surveyors for the railroad were John Neville and Alfred Perkins whose descendants still live in the area.

There was a need for homes for the new settlers, stores and hotels to care for the men working on the railroad and bridges. About this time two of the earliest hotels were built, The Brackett House on the east side of the tracks and the Pine City House, which was built and owned by Mr. James Dudder, where the Pennington block is now. The Dudder House had 37 rooms, and its ballroom, gaily decorated and the largest place in town, was the gathering place for all the functions, religious as well as social for the few years it existed before being destroyed by fire. In those days when all travel was by beast of burden, the hotels maintained feed barns to care for the animals. An idea of the number handled can be gathered from the fact that the Dudder House had two wells to supply water for all its needs.

The village was incorporated in 1881, and the officers took over in 1882. A. E. Conger was the chairman and E. Veen Hoven, recorder. The first minutes on record were dated August 3, 1891 with A. H. Lambert, chairman; James Wandell, recorder; and councilors, as they were called, Thomas Rice, A. Radden and J. W. Axtell. The scale of wages set for the village was \$1.25 per day for a man and \$3.00 for a man and team. One of the bills allowed was to Thomas Henderson. The penmanship of these minutes is beautiful. The last minutes in this first book were for March 16, 1905 with F. E. Smith, president; Frank Pofert, recorder; and Councilors F. J. Rybak, Aug. Carlson, R. L. Wiseman and S. H. Laing. The bill for street lights for the month was \$70 payable to the R. P. Allen Milling Company, and the salary to John

Griffith, the marshal, was \$40. The village indebtedness was \$4,400 and the recorder was bonded for \$2,500. The first ordinance was for disturbing the peace and follows verbatim:

ORDINANCE NO. 1

City do ordain:

Section 1.

That if any person or persons shall within the corporate limits of the Village of Pine City willfully disturb the peace or quiet of said village by any loud or unusual noise by singing, hallowing or screaming or using obscene language or conversation, or by any other device or means whatever or by cruelly beating or abusing any animal, or by quarreling, cursing or threatening, assulting or striking or fighting under any pretense whatever, or shall discharge or fire off any fire arms, every such offense shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor or breach of this ordinance and upon conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not less than five nor more than one hundred dollars or by imprisonment in the County jail or other place of confinement not less than five days nor more than sixty days or both, in the discretion of the village Justice.

Logging was still the biggest industry and at various times there were large sawmills in the town, but gradually Pine City became more a distributing and outfitting point for the larger logging operations in the north end of the county.

This brought into being stores, saloons and banks to satisfy that need. The stores bought and sold everything. An old history describes one as "a department store in the fullest sense of the word, carrying dry goods, ladies' and men's furnishings, boots and shoes, groceries, hardware, furniture, carpets, drugs, stationery, paints, oils, lumber and building materials."

Pine City was a rough, lumberjack town in the fall when the men were preparing for the winter cutting and again in the spring when the "drive was in" and the logs were floated down the Snake, into the St. Croix to Stillwater, the chief milling center for the area. Wanegins were drawn up on shore, where the men ate and slept and skilled rivermen

in bateaux or "cuffing" the logs guided them on their way. Probably one man more closely associated with lumbering than any other was Julius Dosey. For many years he had cruised the northern part of the state for lumber and iron ore, the later years for the Tosier Lumber Company of Stillwater. He was a leader in the civic affairs of the village throughout his life, serving several terms as mayor.

Without scientific management, the logging industry eventually wore itself out and the problem of the cut-over land remained.

The railroad, anxious to build up its trade territory began to campaign for settlers to come in and through farming and dairying restore the region to productivity. In 1895, Frank Karas, a Bohemian from New Prague, Minnesota, was appointed the railroad agent to bring in settlers. Letters and colorful advertising was sent out into Minnesota, neighboring states, and even the old country for settlers to come to Pine county to buy this rich but cheap land. Land seeker excursions were run on the railroad. The response was good, and many thrifty, hardworking Czechs and Bohemians came here, in perhaps the largest number of any single nationality, to make their homes. Endowed with a love of the land and the skill and willingness for all tasks, they and others of various lands began to build it up for permanent living.

The lakes and remaining pine trees still brought in a splendid revenue, for Pine City began to be known as an excellent summer resort.

Several steamers were run on the lakes, meeting every train that came into Pine City, and taking the tourists to resorts on Cross and Pokegama lakes. One hotel on the latter was called "Tuxedo Inn" because of the excellence of its "carriage trade."

People from the Twin Cities and St. Cloud came here for week-end entertainment, and the women in ballroom gowns and the men in tuxedos danced to the strains of famous orchestras of their time. An old ad says: "The finest fishing and hunting in the state are found here. Nature has done much to make this an ideal outing place, and the hand of man has added the comforts, conveniences, and luxuries of everyday life. Before you decide on your next outing place,

investigate Pine City resorts." Not too unlike our advertising of today.

Steamboat excursions were the favorite pastime of the local folks too. The Victoria, Stowe, Cumberland and Kate R. were the best known boats. The latter could carry up to 80 passengers. She was owned by Capt. Dick Robinson and was run for many years by Captain Elijah Seavey. "Cap Seavey," as he was called, had come out from his native state of Maine. He operated steamboats on the St. Croix for a period of 22 years. During the gold rush he had driven an ox team to Colorado, the trip taking 72 days. He was also a trained lumber man and during the winters took his crew of men and teams into the woods for the cutting, but in the summer and fall, he was employed here as skipper of the Kate R.

The resort industry on such an ambitious scale waned with the loss of the dams necessary for high water, but still Pine City is the trading center for many summer people who make their homes on Cross and Pokegama lakes. Lately there has been a move by local folks to build year around homes on Cross lake and many attractive show places have resulted.

The Conservation club is active and alert to any move for the betterment of wild life in the region; the rebuilding of a dam and the restoration of high water is one of their present projects. This will bring in more tourists.

Another chance at fame was offered to Pine City in the early days when it was thought copper in paying quantities had been discovered near here. In fact a stock company with \$250,000 capital was formed which sank shafts to the depth of 150 feet where a "wonderfully rich deposit" was found. [At the beginning of the century it was felt that Pine City would be more famous for its copper mines than all of its other attractions.] Today, however, the site of the old copper mine is an interesting Sunday drive for visitors and a place for the bass fishermen to try their skill along the river.

As the white families increased in Pine City, the need for a school arose. The first building is still in existence although in poor condition and has been moved from its original location, the site of the present village hall, to the fair grounds, where it is used for 4-H displays during the county fair. This building should be given a permanent

foundation, its bell tower restored, all as nearly as possible to its original form, to be a landmark in the community.

The school was divided into the "little room," with pupils up to the fifth grade and the "big room," for the rest; even some high school subjects were given. L. H. McKusick and Colonel J. F. Stone were among the first teachers. Colonel Stone's influence was to remain in the village a long, long time. for the Emil J. Stone Circle of the G. A. R. is named for his wife. His daughter Elizabeth, the late Mrs. J. Y. Breckinridge, won recognition for herself by being one of the first women in the state to become a registered pharmacist. She was also postmistress for several years, at a time when few women sought a career outside their homes.

The school was the social center for the village. Church and Sunday school services were held there and all the get-togethers, spelling bees, song fests, etc.

The fine new Webster school was built at the present site in 1894 and the first high school graduating class, correctly styled the Pioneer class, was presented June 1, 1903 in the opera house, the site of the present Challean store. The graduates were May Pennington, James (Ben) Hurley, Martin Hurley, Anna M. Voss, Marie Kibler and Jessamine Allen.

The high school was built in 1914. An addition to this, and the splendid auditorium were completed in 1938. The Webster school, having burned in January 1940, the present new grade building was completed in 1942. Since 1932 the school has been under the continuous superintendency of V. W. Ziebarth except for two years served in the Marines in World War II. The school has maintained an excellent scholastic rating and a high percentage of its graduates go away to various schools of higher learning. The grounds and buildings are well cared for and in 1948 the athletic field was lighted for night games. Pine City has had district championship teams in both football and basketball and several years ago the band placed less than a point of second in a playing and marching exhibition at the state fair.

The group to really distinguish themselves, however, is the agriculture department, under the leadership of A. A. Hoberg. They have won two national championships in judging poultry and poultry products, eggs and dressed poultry. They

won \$900 at Waterloo, Iowa, in a national judging contest, eight gold trophies, and three silver ones, and received the gold medal for having the highest average of any school in the state for judging. This medal was awarded by "The Minnesota Farmer." They have averaged about five trophies yearly. A truly outstanding record!

Like most frontier towns fires have burned out goodly sections at various times. One of the most disastrous occurred in April 1897. It was a very cold night with exceptionally high winds. The fire started in the Glasow warehouse, a part of the present Fair store, and gutted the entire block. About a year later, a fire of incendiary origin burned the block from the Agnes hotel and across where the Pine City Mercantile is now, to the river—with the exception of one house on the river bank. The Lakeview House on the site of the present Pennington home, which had replaced the Dudder House, was burned in this fire. There was no form of fire protection; men, women and children helped with any receptacle that would hold water.

These disasters led to the demand for some sort of fire fighting equipment and in 1898 the first fire engine was purchased from the Waterous Company of St. Paul. It was a coal burning steam engine and so constructed that the engineer, Fritz Johnson, could get up steam pressure in as little as four and one-half minutes. The water supply for the main part of town, a cement lined tank, was constructed on the corner by the fire hall. This was filled by pumping from the river. The suction hose was put into the tanks and it could be used continuously for two and a half hours. After each fire the tank was refilled before the engine was put away. For fires in other parts of town the engine was placed on a dock and the water pumped from the river or lake. These docks were located, one on the lake at the end of the Cooperative Creamery street, another at the site of the present highway bridge and a third where the ice houses are now. From these locations, of course, water could be pumped for an unlimited time.

After city water was installed in 1913, and another type of equipment was necessary, the old engine remained in the fire hall. A few years ago it was placed in the care of the Waterous Company who keep it in repair and insured, although

it is still the property of the village. It will be returned here for the Centennial exhibit at the next county fair.

Henry Buirge, Fritz Johnson and Robert Wilcox served as volunteer firemen for most of their lives, in fact Mr. Wilcox is still secretary of their Association.

The earliest church to be built in Pine City was the Presbyterian, erected in 1878, later the Catholic, Methodist, and Lutheran churches were built. The old Methodist and Catholic churches have been replaced by brick structures, but the others with the exception of remodeling and additions are the original buildings. In 1947 the Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer was established. The building was moved in from the country and remodeled and the parish established by the members without the help of a resident pastor and through a great deal of volunteer work.

Modern improvements started in the village when electric lights replaced the old kerosene street lamps which the marshal had tended. Frank McCormick, from Duluth, had installed a steam engine and small dynamo in a building in the vicinity of the present Hurley duplex. There were three arc lights on the streets, and the stores and a few houses were serviced. He had hoped to sell the plant to the village, but since it had proven unprofitable at the time, they refused, and it was partially dismantled. Later R. P. Allen purchased what remained, moved it down and ran it in connection with his mill. It was later enlarged and placed where the steam plant is now. After purchasing the Chengwatana dam from the Munch Brothers, the Eastern Minnesota Power Company was formed in 1911. At the time of its sale to the Wisconsin-Hydro Company in 1928 it was servicing more than 30 communities. This was perhaps the largest single financial transaction of the county. At present the company has been taken over by the R.E.A., who is expanding the facilities and plant to convert to diesel power.

The first telephones were installed in the village in 1900 by the Minnesota Mutual Company which had headquarters in North Branch. The first operator was Maggie Payne. In 1918 the Northwestern Bell Company took it over, and in 1938 converted it to its present modern type. The main office and exchange serving Sandstone, Hinckley and Pine City is located here, employing about 18 people.

The first sewers were installed in 1916 and many extensions of this service have been added as the village expanded. Under the P.W.A. a sewage disposal plant was built on the river. This is now inadequate and must either be remodeled or another plant built. Before its construction, sewage had been run into the river and lake and formed a decidedly dangerous hazard to health, especially when the swimming beach was in use.

Many of the facilities established in the early days are still operating. One of these, is the mill, which was built as a flour mill and elevator in 1897 by R. P. Allen, who was its secretary and manager. One hundred forty barrels of flour, and 20 tons of feed were milled daily and the products were used not only locally, but were sent east and even to England and Ireland.

The creamery was started when a group headed by Fred Hodge and P. W. McAllen took over a cream station and started a new plant in the west end of town. This was later purchased and the Cooperative creamery was built at its present site on land donated for the purpose by the late A. M. Challeen. Under up-to-date management it has continued to expand, contributing to building up not only the village but the rural area as well. S. A. Streigel has been the secretary for many years.

Pine City has had several newspapers. The oldest, the Pine County Pioneer, was established in December 1885 by Ed C. Gottry and was edited and managed for many years by Walter Gottry and Sons, who later became its owners. A few years after the Pioneer was started, J. Adam Bede established a two-page magazine-sized paper called Bede's Budget. It contained political advertising, poems, jokes, etc. In 1897 it was converted into a regular newspaper and called the Pine Poker, because as he said, he intended to use it to prod the conscience of the community on occasion. Z. M. Edwards, a one time roving reporter, was connected with both papers over a long period of time. The papers passed through various hands and finally merged under the ownership of W. S. McEachern and D. R. Wilcox as the Pine Poker-Pioneer in 1939. Mr. Wilcox is at present the sole owner and editor of a fine up-to-date newspaper office.

The First State Bank of Pine City began business in 1890

with a capital stock of \$10,000 and average deposits of \$65,000. The officers were F. A. Hodge, president; P. W. McAllen, cashier; and J. D. Boyle, assistant cashier. The former sold their interests to J. C. Carlson of Rush City and R. P. Allen in 1919 and [in 1920 the First National Bank was formed] The Farmers and Merchants Bank of Pine City and the State Bank of Beroun were later absorbed. In 1946 the bank's fiftieth anniversary was celebrated, finding it with a capital of \$65,000, a surplus of \$85,000 and deposits of over \$3,500,000. The present officers are R. P. Allen, president; Geo. Dorr and R. E. Carlson, vice presidents; Leonard Machart, executive vice president; M. B. Baron, cashier; and C. R. Perkins, assistant cashier. The bank's healthy growth is a direct reflection of the area it serves. The early officers can be credited with helping to establish the dairying industry here, since they helped to bring in thoroughbred dairy animals.

In fact "the cow, the pig and the little red hen," under scientific management have made our rural areas rich and profitable customers for our village.

The P.W.A. and W.P.A. programs helped Pine City to acquire some of its most worthwhile assets. The schools and sewage disposal plant as previously mentioned, and the beautiful village hall, which houses our library, village offices, jail, a well equipped hall and kitchen suitable for any public or private function, the fire hall, highway patrol offices as well as several county offices. The main streets are hard surfaced, and in 1948 more were opened and made ready for some surfacing next year.

The past few years in spite of high prices and the shortage of materials, many new homes have been built and the stores have been remodeled and given new exteriors. Locker and deep freeze self-service units have been added to some of these. Under construction now is the large addition to the Sauer building, which fronting on the highway, will greatly improve the appearance of the city at that particular spot.

The huge new Land O'Lakes drying plant, the addition to the already large Coca-Cola plant, the constant growth and improvement of the Pine City Dairy have all contributed to the chance for employment for the residents and drawn new people to the village. The products from our local in-

dustries are sent far and wide in the nation and are valued well into the millions of dollars.

Pine City is a good place to live!

There is an opportunity here for the wage earner.

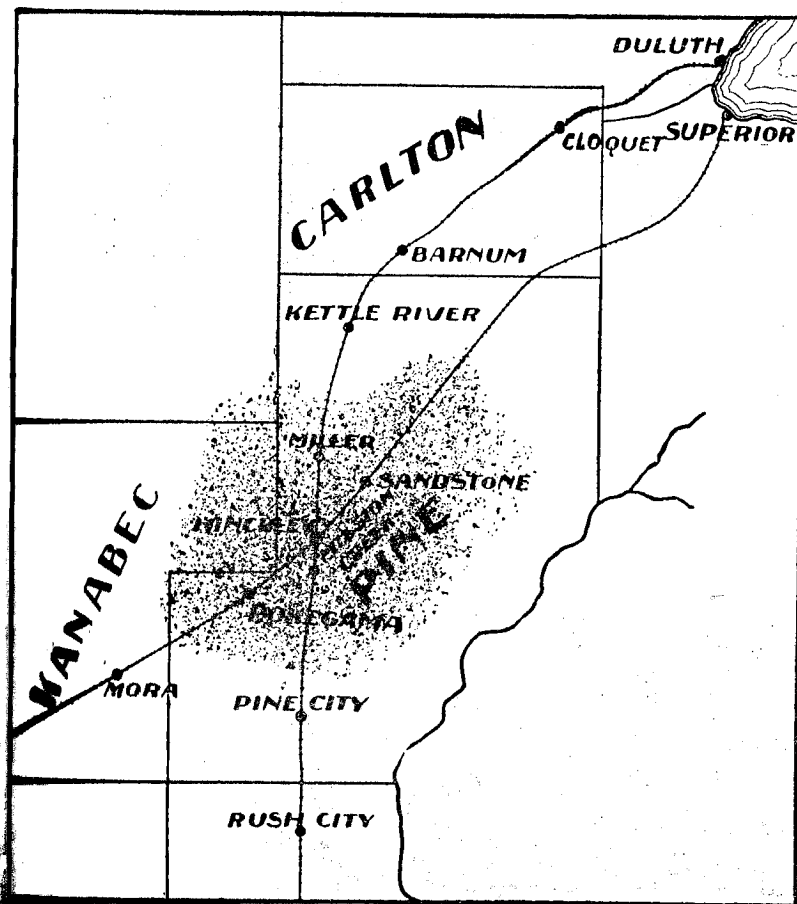
The children have the advantages of good churches and schools with their allied activities, supervised play grounds, a swimming beach with the constant service of a life guard and the chance for instruction in swimming and life saving under trained Red Cross workers, a tennis court, well lighted and maintained, skating and hockey rink, Boy and Girl Scout organizations and adult groups that are interested in their welfare. The annual Christmas party at the armory, the Theatre party, the Halloween celebration, and this year the elaborate street lighting and trimming Christmas effects, all contribute to the enrichment of their lives.

For the adults, there are the various church groups and lodges, the Commercial and Conservation clubs, many card clubs, the baseball and kittenball teams, and the opportunity to serve the state and nation in the local National Guard unit which received such a fine report from its reviewing officer a short time ago.

The war years and the past post-war years have brought prosperity and growth to the community of Pine City. How much it can grow and how far it shall advance remains the task of some future historian to record. His work will be made simpler with the well kept records of modern life to supply the materials. Ours has been the task of gathering what actual records there have been and seeking out tales from the memories of our remaining pioneers. If to some, those memories seem distorted more or less, we can only say we have tried to do our best with the information we could acquire. If in the pattern of life recorded here, as in the pattern of a cloth, some stand out in brighter colors than their background, that is only to be expected.

Until that future date we respectfully submit this "History of Early Pine City."

HAZEL KNISKERN BARON.



MAP OF BURNED OVER AREA—1894