



WELCOME TO HISTORIC SAUGATUCK

You are at the south end of downtown on the southwest corner of the junction of Butler and Water Streets. Culver Street is a continuation of Water Street heading to the east. The Kalamazoo River – called the main street of Allegan County - flows from the south, passing this vantage point on course to its mouth on Lake Michigan about a mile to the north and west.

In 1830 a block north of this spot William G. Butler – the first white settler of Allegan County - built a log cabin and founded the little settlement that was to become Saugatuck. Butler was joined in 1835 by Stephen A. Morrison who established his tannery business along the riverbank.

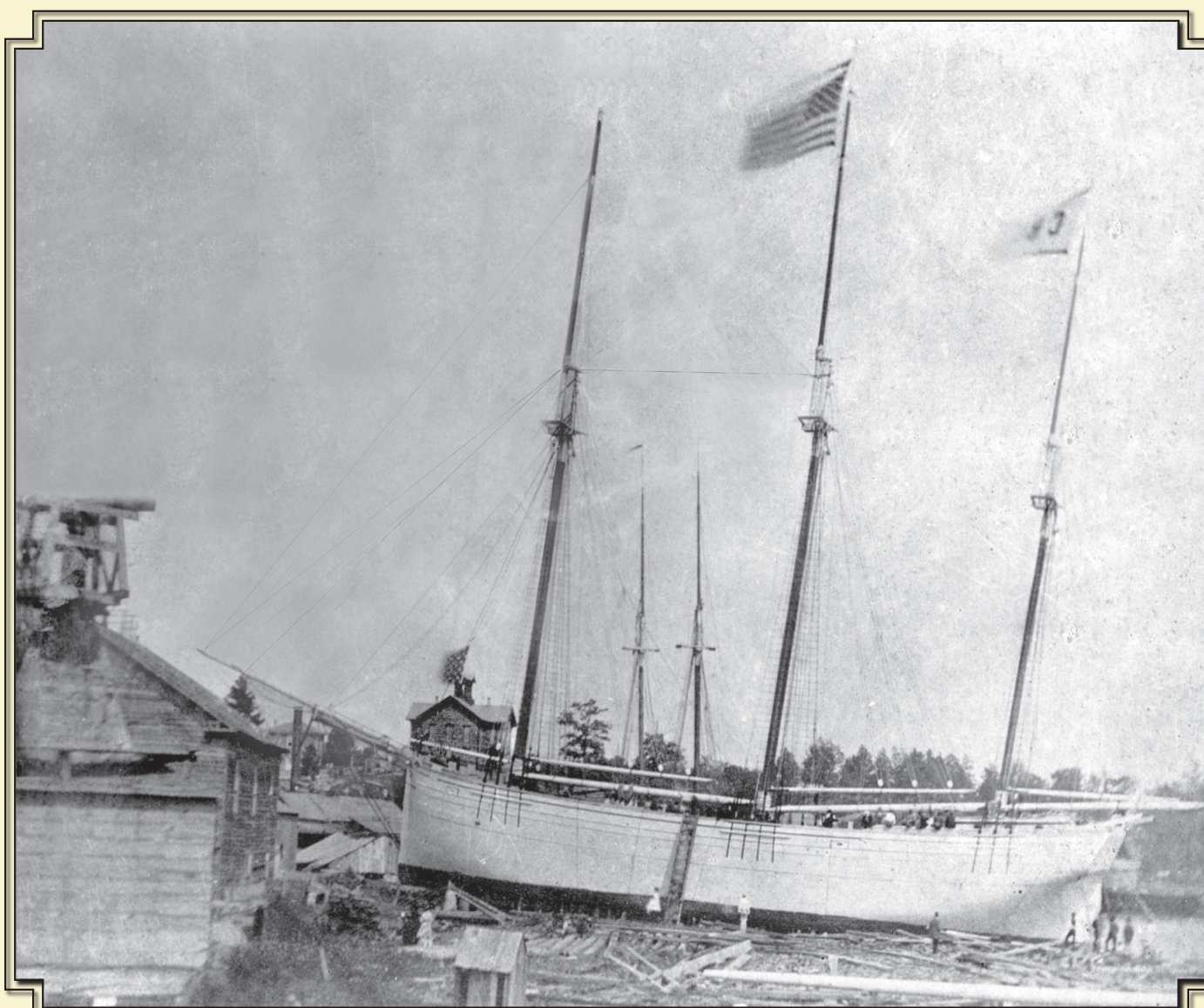
In those early years, a small village and a sawmill developed at “wild-cat” Singapore near the mouth of the river. But by 1875 Singapore had come and gone and Saugatuck, then known as “the flats”, was a hub of activity dominated by lumber mills, and ship building activity.

Along Butler and Water streets, stores, hotels, and saloons prospered. The historic 1874 photograph of the area provides a glimpse of the south end of the downtown when the village was a busy and rowdy riverfront town. These photos which date from the 1890s to the 1940s provide a memorable montage of scenes and structures as seen from this most historic vantage point.

Site #18

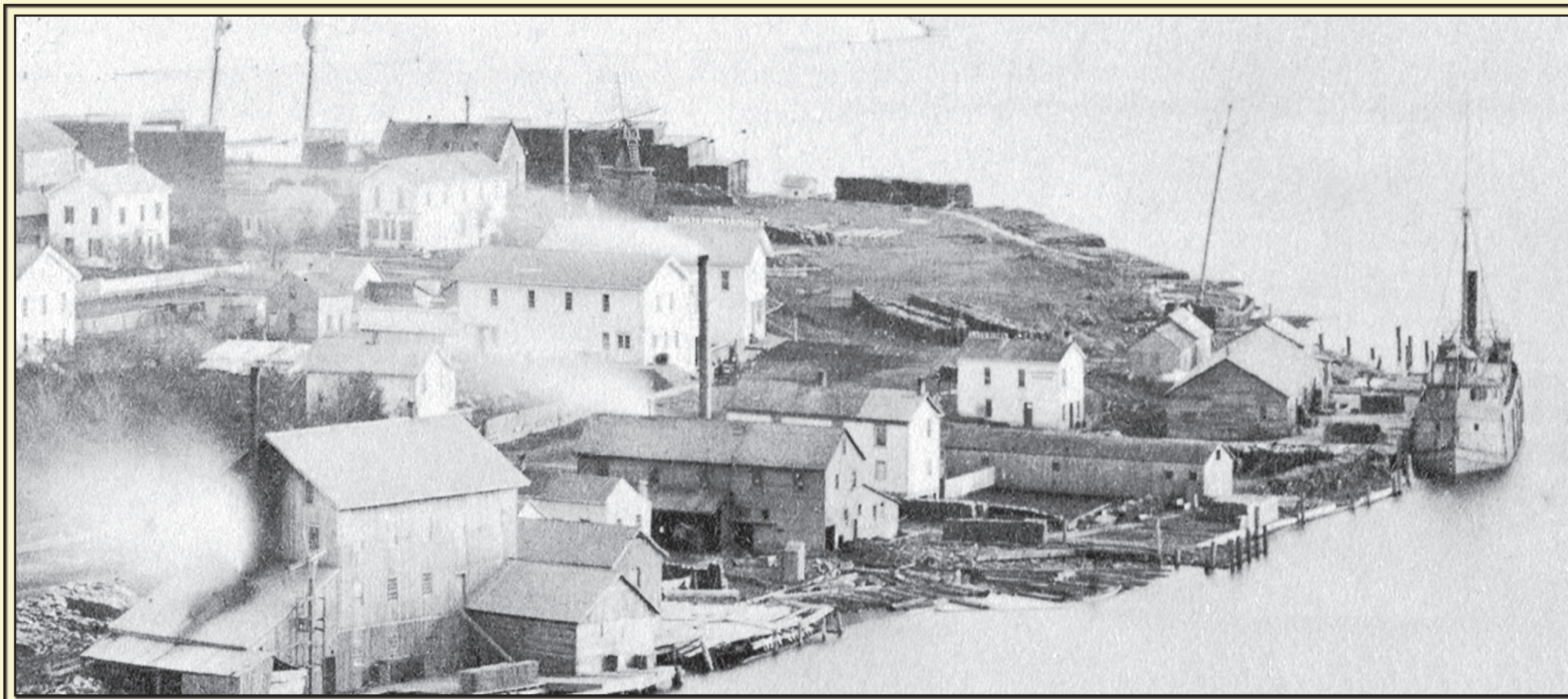
MORRISON HOME ca 1890

Built in 1857 on the northeast corner of this intersection, the home can be seen in the 1874 birds eye photo. Stephen Morrison and his wife Elizabeth were truly Saugatuck pioneers. They owned much of the surrounding property including the Morrison Hall on the southeast corner and the tannery property along the river. The structure was destroyed by fire in 1978.



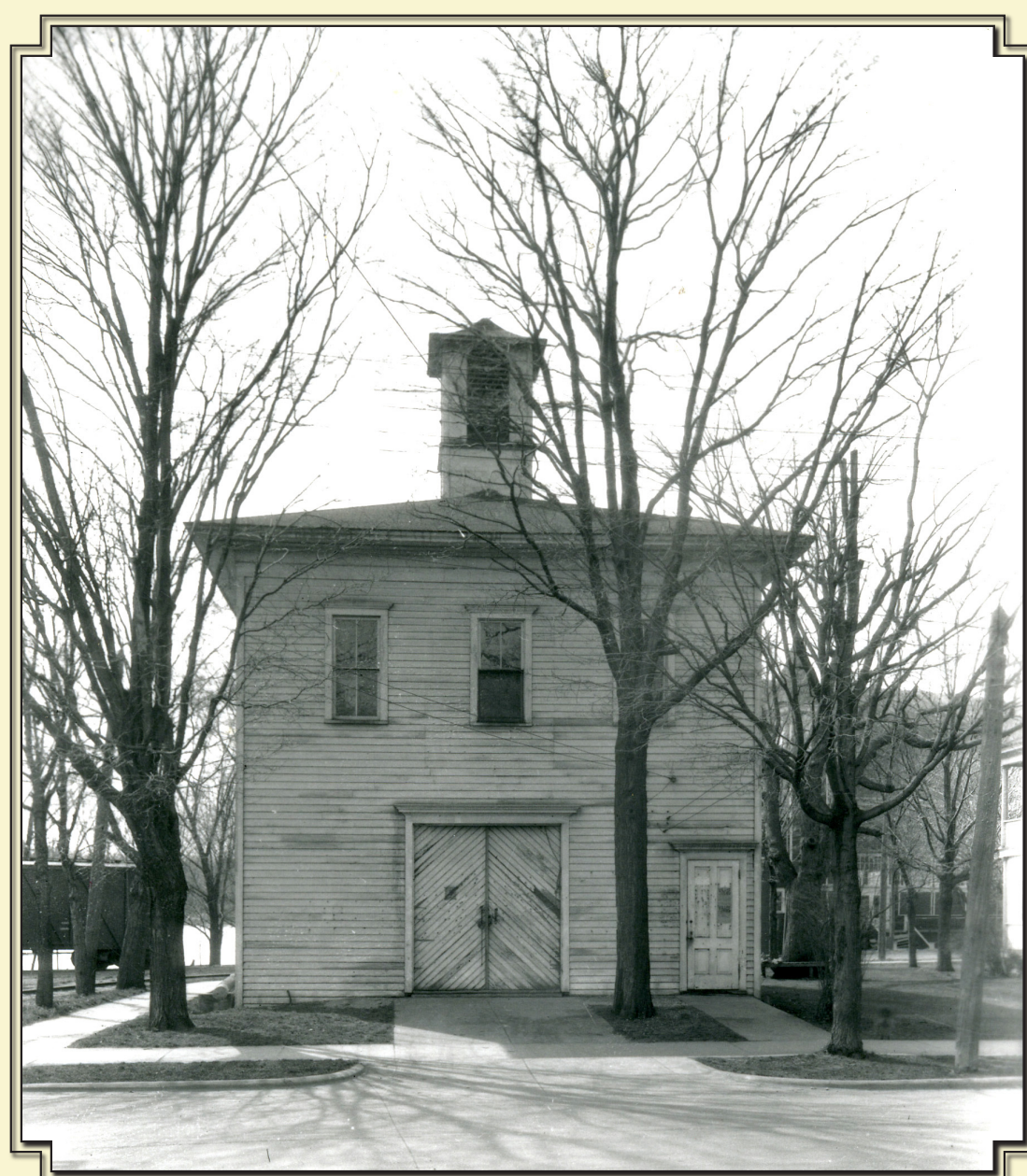
MARTEL SHIPYARD 1874

The 137' schooner George M. Case is seen ready to launch in the John Martel shipyard on the riverbank south of Culver St and just west of Butler St. The hull was built in Allegan and vessel construction completed here.



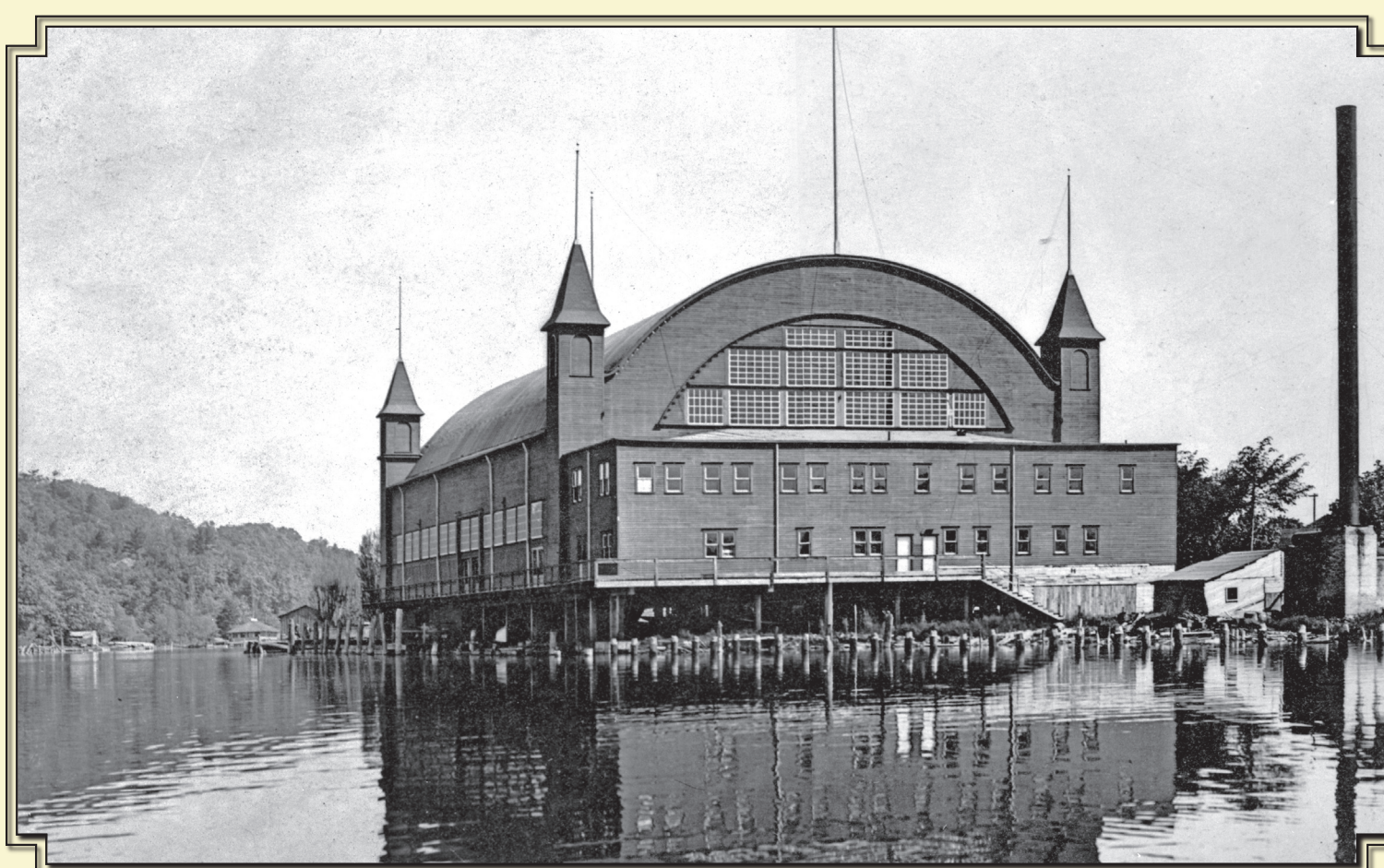
1874 BIRDS EYE VIEW OF THIS CORNER The dark square objects near the water are piles of lumber awaiting shipment. The open area between Culver and Water Streets and the riverbank was used for shipbuilding. Within ten years from the date of this birds eye photo many of the buildings were lost to fire, including the very large steam powered Heath grist mill structure seen on

the river bank to the north. The large buildings along Butler Street just to the north burned in 1876. Morrison's hall on the southeast corner of Butler and Culver streets burned in 1879. This location was the area of the original burying ground for Native Americans and early settlers.



VILLAGE HALL ca 1920

The Village Hall was built in 1879 to house fire engines and provide a base of operation for village activities. In 1927 the exterior was rebuilt to a design – retained to the present - by local artist and architect Carl Hoerman. It no longer serves as a fire station but does house the administrative offices of the City of Saugatuck.



BIG PAVILION ca 1915

Built in the spring of 1909 this immense structure towered over a full block fronting on the river and Water Street. Barn red, the building was plainly visible from here. Featuring thousands of multi-color lights it was dubbed the brightest spot on the Great Lakes. In May 1960 a spectacular fire destroyed the Pavilion including the dance hall, movie theater and Dock Bar.



HOTEL BUTLER ca 1948

Built as a flour mill ca 1891, it was converted to a hotel in 1903. The top two floors were removed in 1971 creating the structure seen today. This photo shows the shuffleboard court which was removed ca 1980. The burying ground marker remains in place and unaltered.



INTERURBAN ca 1916

The Interurban was an electrified rail line that ran between Saugatuck, Holland and Grand Rapids. Service began in July 1899 and ran until 1926. The cars carried both freight and passengers and the business was quite successful until the advent of privately owned vehicles in the 1920s. The southern end of the line was at this intersection. The track made a U-turn loop in front of the Hotel Butler. The building on the left was the Interurban station.



SNUG HARBOR ca 1933

This building was the Interurban station and then a combination Shell service station and Greyhound bus station. It contained a small waiting room for bus passengers. Owned and operated by Ed Force from the early 1930s to the 1950s, it was replaced by a modern gas station building by the middle 1970s.