

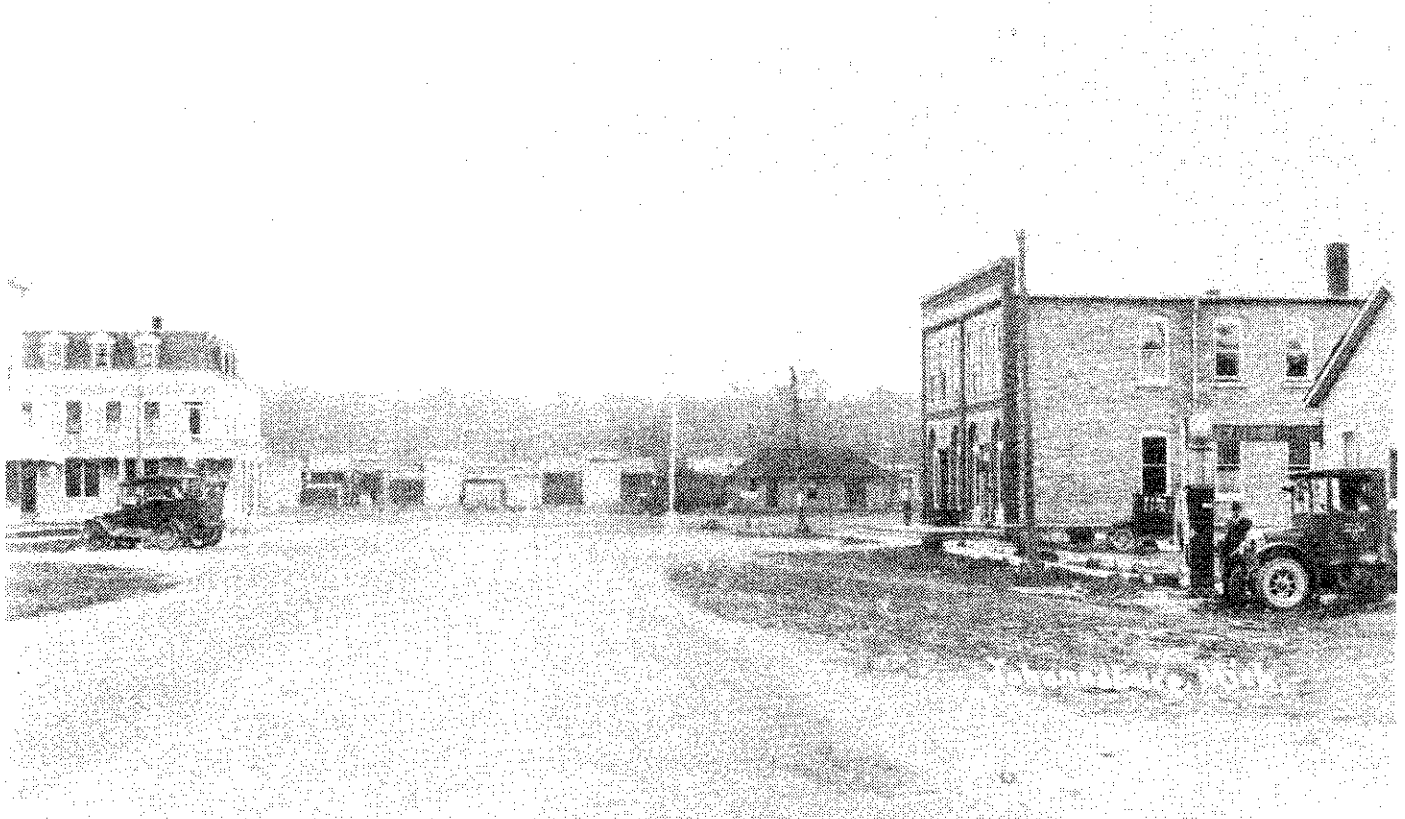
had given notice of its closing, so workers had some time to try to find employment elsewhere. A \$12,000 bonus was divided among the men. Mr. Wilhelm Raae was left to dispose of the Company property. Employees were given first chance to buy Company land, for five dollars an acre. Company houses were sold at from fifty to ninety dollars. Most of these houses were either moved or torn down. Very few of the original houses remain. The hotel was torn down by Peter and Joseph Kwapis and the lumber used to build their barns. The railroad station was moved and converted into a restaurant. The jail was moved to Herb Gingell's farm to be used as a chicken coop. The Brick Block was deeded to Charlton Township as a town hall. In 1931 this building was remodeled and became the Johannesburg school.

In October 1929 Henry Ford bought a complete log camp outfit from the Johannesburg Manufacturing Company for his Dearborn Museum. It included bunks, blankets, big wheels, water troughs, neck yokes, eveners, harnesses, sleighs, cross cut saws, axes, etc...probably one of the most complete camp outfits remaining. The Company gave to the Park Division of the State of Michigan big wheels, sleighs and other logging equipment which were placed in Hartwick Pines State Park.

As soon as areas were lumbered, the land was offered for sale. Ten dollars an acre was the price paid by buyers who were not mill employees. Now much of the land that was once covered with hardwood forest has been converted into farmland.

Close on the heels of the closing of the mill came the Depression. Many men who were unable to find work joined the C.C.C.'s or the W.P.A. One W.P.A. project was remodeling the old school into a gymnasium. Now with a place to play, Johannesburg's first basketball team was organized. Beulah Colbeck was the school's first cheerleader. At this time, about 1931, the school's colors, red and white, were chosen. Visiting teams were not impressed with Johannesburg's gym, which was far from regulation size and lacking in many facilities, but they soon came to respect Johannesburg's basketball team. The girls had a basketball team too.

Since the closing of the mill, the school has been the most important thing in Johannesburg. At the time the school was moved into the Brick Block, Johannesburg consolidated with surround areas and became the Johannesburg Rural Agricultural School. By 1948 this building was becoming crowded and a new four room elementary school was built next to the gymnasium. At noon pupils from here were taken to the cafeteria in the basement of the old school.



Johannesburg looking east showing the Company Store and the Hotel on the left and the Brick Block on the right. Taken about 1915.