

## J.J. Newberry Store · 378 River Street

*Like any first phase of a company, the line of J.J. Newberry department stores began modestly. Born in middle-eastern Pennsylvania, J.J. Newberry commenced his career when he was little more than a boy, running errands for area stores. After becoming a clerk in one of the local department stores, he later became associated with a 5-10-25 cent store named the S.H. Kress Company located in Pennsylvania.*

*In 1928, the J.J. Newberry Company expanded into Michigan and opened a store in Manistee. The store opened with 24 complete departments of new merchandise. For the next 13 years, the store remained open in the former F.W. Cron building at 378 River St., but by the spring of 1941 it was decided that the store would expand into the building occupied by the former Miller Hardware, which was located next door and had just gone out of business.*



*With the expanded and remodeled store, the J.J. Newberry Co. continued to do a brisk business until the morning of Jan. 5, 1942 when a fire broke out in the building and soon spread throughout, destroying the entire structure. The cause of the fire was never published and although their newly remodeled store was a total loss, it wasn't long before the company decided on whether or not to rebuild as in April 1942 it was announced that the store would be reconstructed on the same location as the old complex and be finished by late July.*



*While spring found its way to summer, construction of the new building was right on schedule and by late July, the new J.J. Newberry Co. store was ready to open. The new building was erected in 11 weeks by the Garrick Construction Company of Chicago using the same type of construction employed in the building of the new Ford bomber plant at Willow Run, the building has been constructed without a single pillar. The building was constructed almost entirely of wood and bricks utilizing only one steel beam in the entire building, directly across the front of the store."*



*By the late 1950s the local store continued to grow in prosperity and expanded once again.*