Sunday, 14 January 2018 The Gazette **GUEST COLUMN** | AL PIERSON 

Celebrating Time Check's history and resiliency

The Time Check neighborhood traces its beginnings to the early 1870s, shortly after property along the west side of the Cedar River was annexed into Cedar Rapids. In the earliest days of Time Check, a great majority of residents worked across the river at the railroad yards north of downtown.

The name 'Time Check' is said to have evolved from this relationship the railroads were often short on payroll, and would regularly provide the workers postdated paychecks. Under credit arrangements with local banks, workers would be allowed to bank these checks in advance of noted dates to cover expenses, and the banks would delay the railroad's obligation. These checks became known in local parlance as 'time checks,' and over time, the term grew to be used to describe the neighborhood as a whole.

The relationship between local residents and the railroad continued for many years, and when the railroads faded, the Quaker Oats plant provided many residents with new jobs and the ability to remain in the neighborhood.

The tightly knit, bluecollar nature of the Time Check neighborhood played an important role in its development. Over time, the stable workforce attracted additional industry to the heart of the city, providing stable jobs and opportunities. Its central location near downtown, proximity to the city's major parks and attractions, pedestrian-based traffic and location along the river provided the many family businesses and restaurants in the neighborhood not only a local, but citywide, customer base.

When the flood of 2008 struck the city, Time Check was one of the first neighborhoods to be evacuated and the hardest hit. Today, the landscape of the commercial district, which originally included several major employers, has been substantially altered. While Diamond V and Quaker Oats were among the first businesses to reopen after the flood, the Time Check neighborhood lost a significant number of single-family homes and multifamily rental units to the floodwaters.

The 'West Side Rising' memorial and the 'Gateway to the River Memorial Plaza' on O Avenue NW are progressing, with completion planned for the 10th anniversary of the flood on June 13.

The 'West Side Rising' memorial is a privately funded site that celebrates the resiliency of the residents who were affected by the 2008 flood. The 'Gateway to the River Memorial Plaza' is funded by the city, and will provide a gathering place for reflection next to the memorial. The idea of a memorial was first proposed by northwest residents immediately after the 2008 flood. In 2013, Gary Hinzman, Susie Weinacht and Pat Cobb came to the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association with the idea to design a memorial. Architect Jim Novak designed a beautiful piece of art. The glimmering steel frames are ghost images of homes that once stood along the river. The blue clocks on the sculpture represent the blue porch lights that signified families returning to homes.

We are closing in on our fundraising goal of $275,000. We have cash in the bank, pledges and inkind donations totaling $225,000. We are seeking $35,000 in donations to finish the memorial. Every dollar donated will have a match by the Hall Perrine Foundation of 50 cents.

The memorial fundraising is being done by the NWNNA, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit. Donations can be made to West Side Rising, c/o the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation at 324 Third St. SE, Cedar Rapids, IA 52401. Please consider helping us with a tax-deductible contribution.

• Al Pierson is president of the Northwest Neighbors Neighborhood Association. [Copyright © 2018 The Gazette](http://www.gazetteonline.com/)

WEST SIDE RISING MEMORIAL