

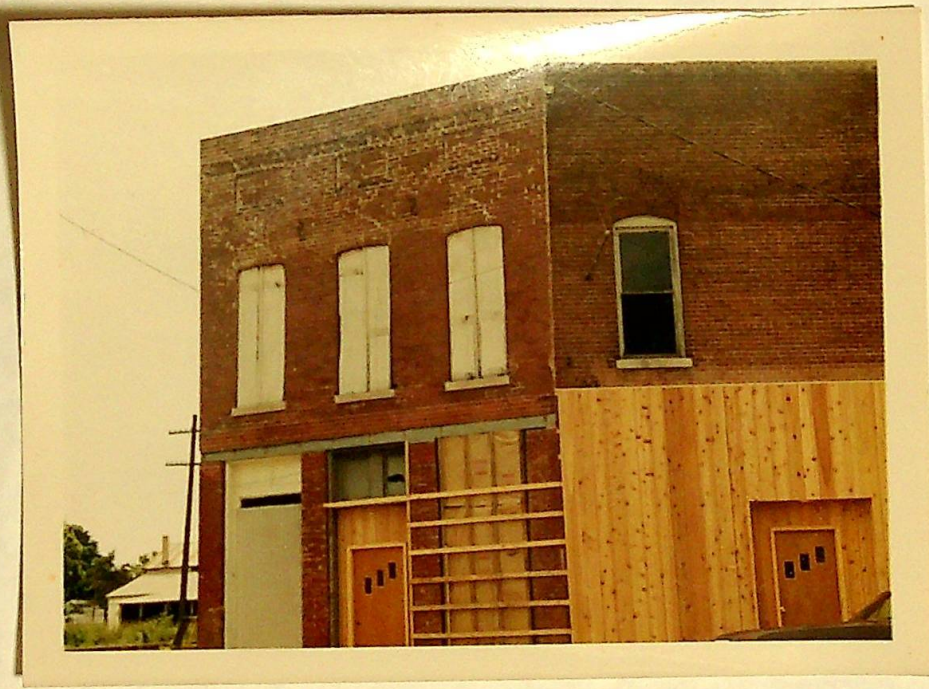
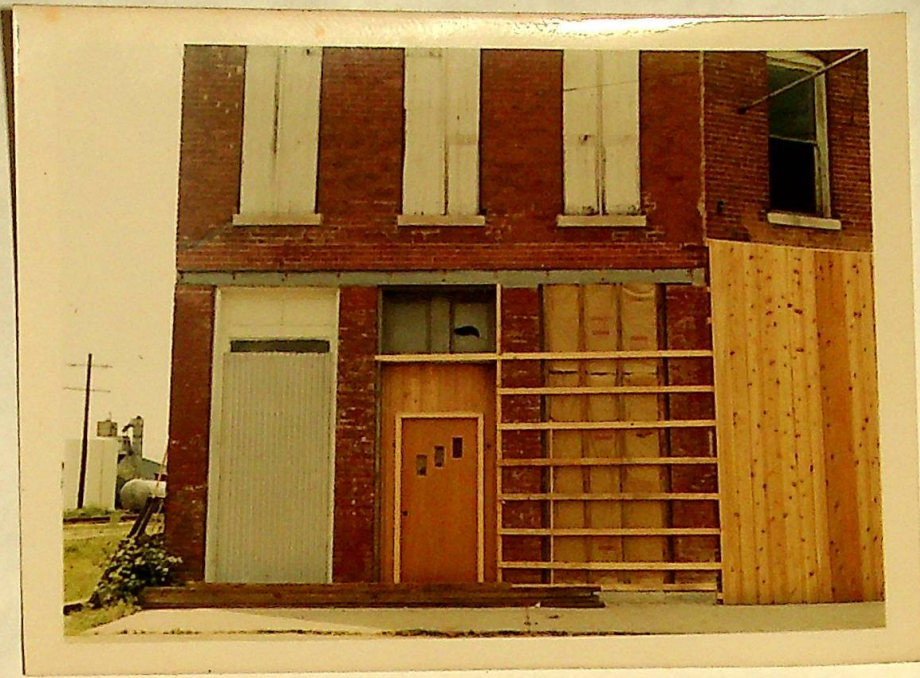
R & R Companies
R & R Construction Company

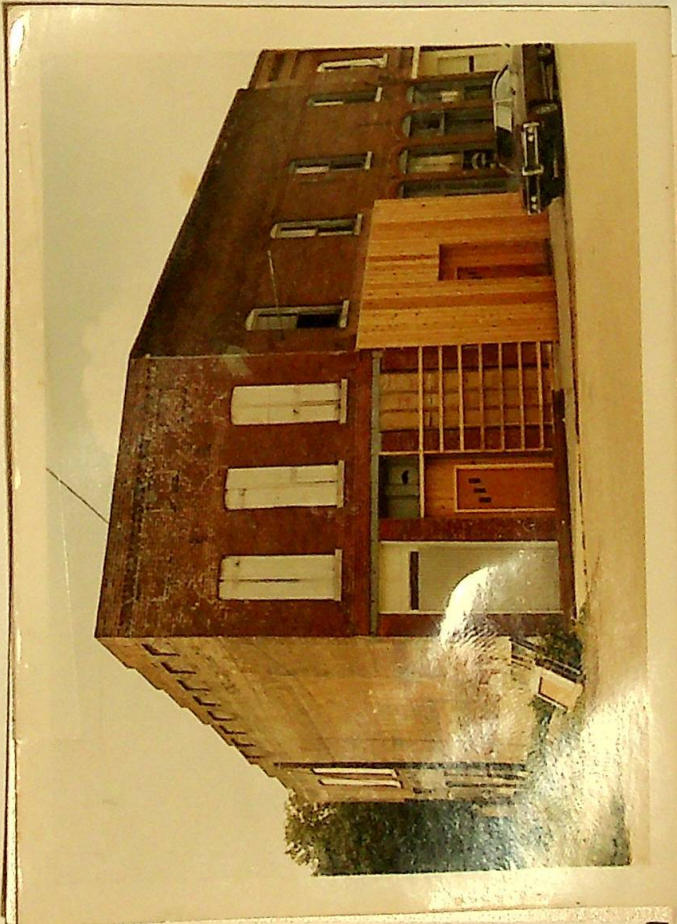
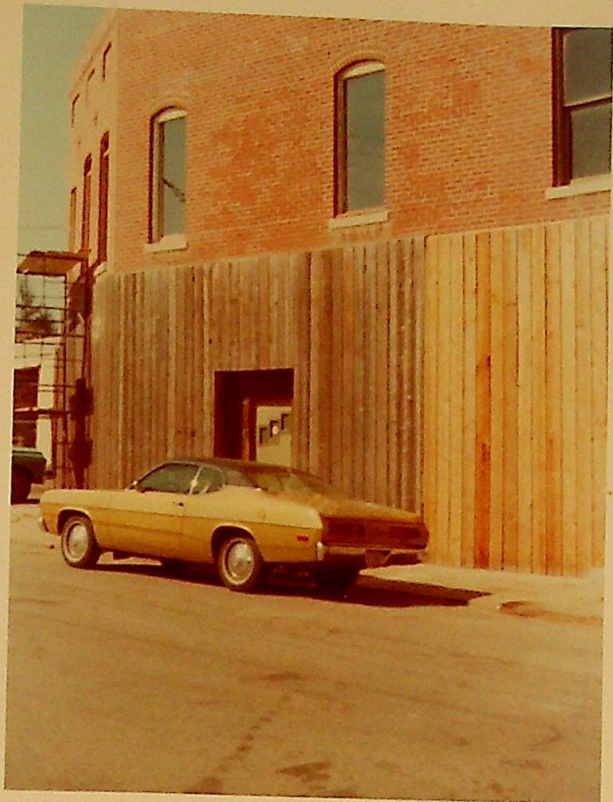
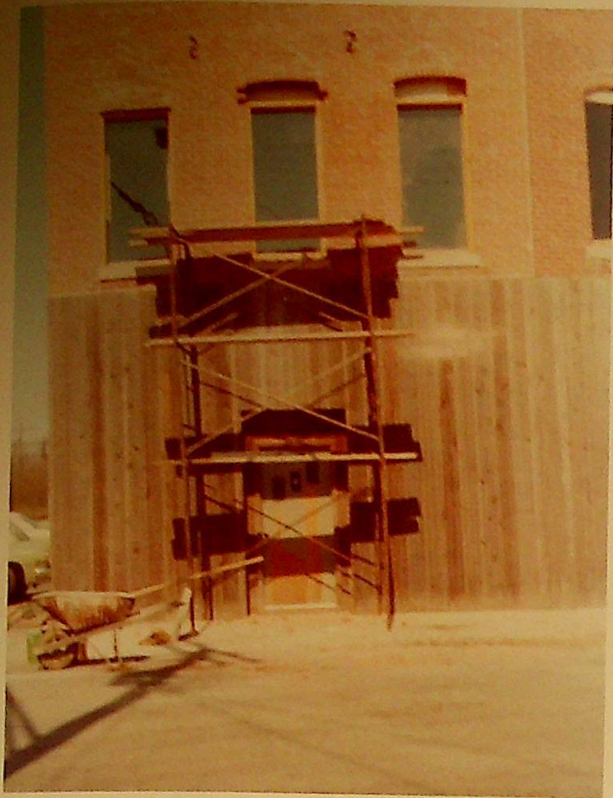
P.O. Box 36 • Whitestown, Indiana 46075

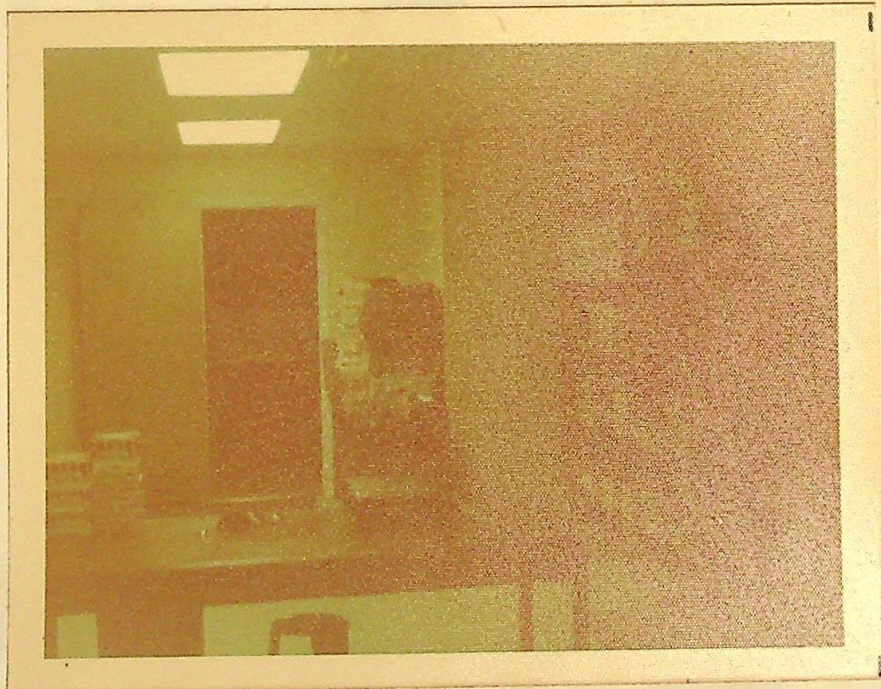
National: 1-800-783-6141

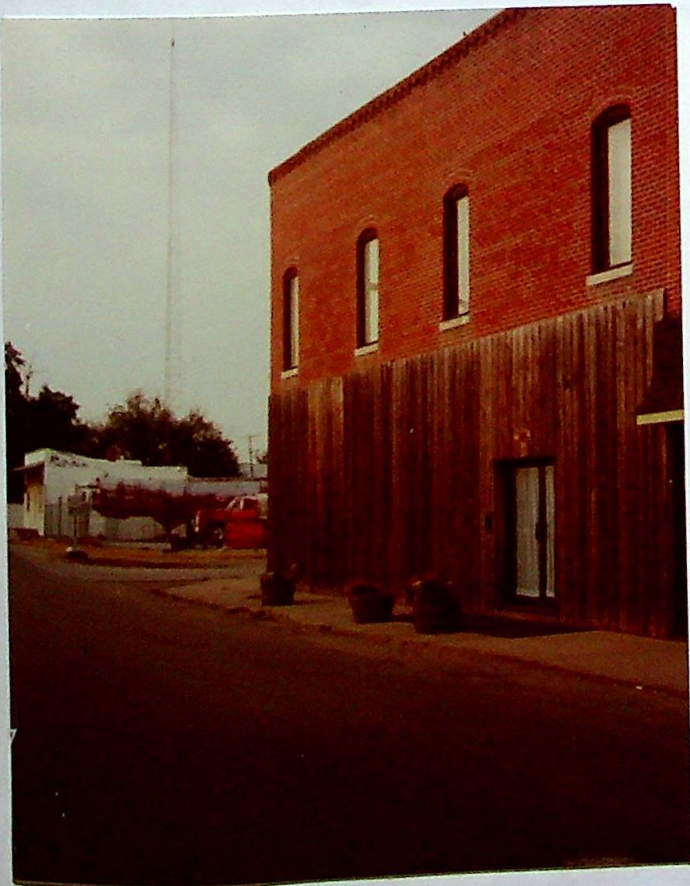
FAX: (317) 769-6140

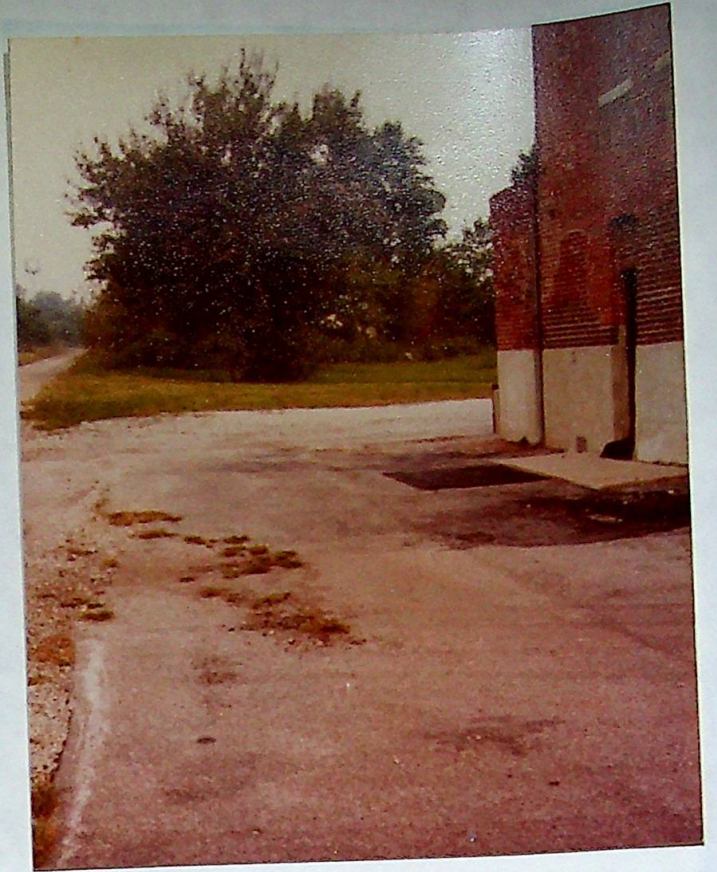
Phone: (317) 769-3290



































EXIT

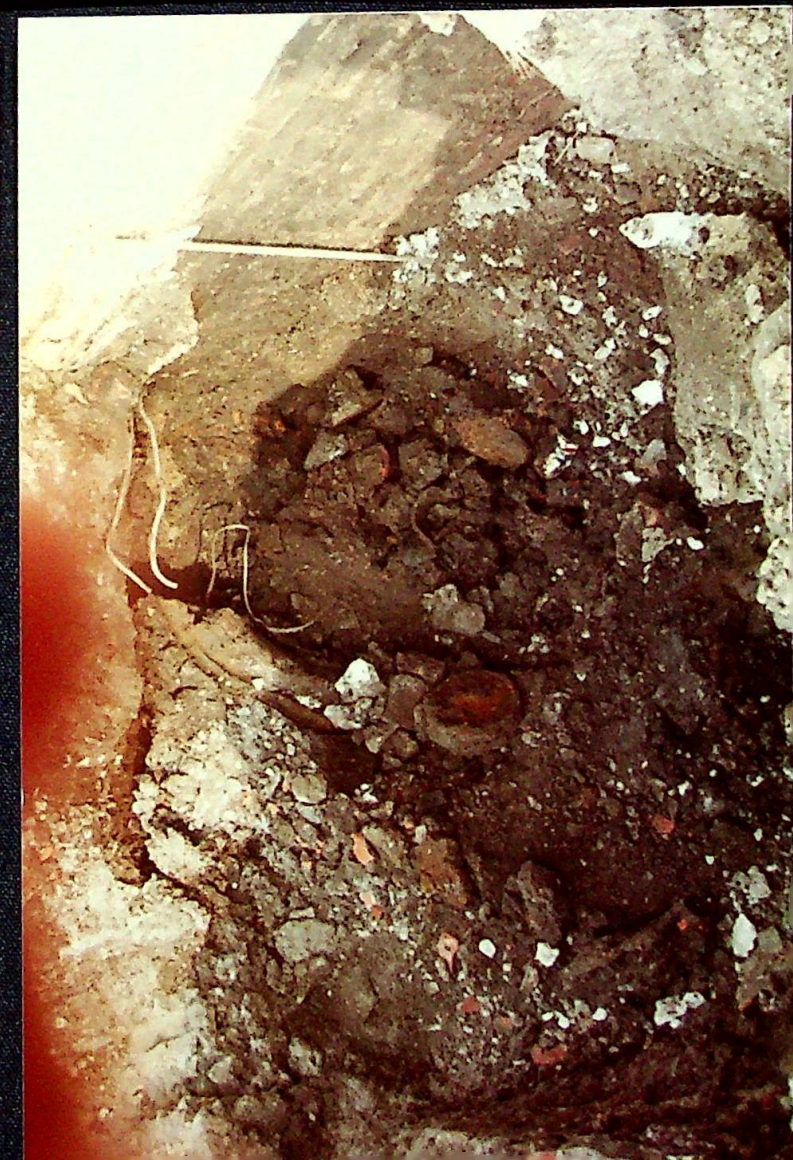


















THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 1983

Sports — 22-26

Obituaries — 26

Finance — 27-28

PAGE 19



Star photo

Nearly deserted Barnes Street reflects mood in Whitestown, a town facing 'unincorporation'

Town considers folding

Why bother? Whitestown asks

By WILLIAM J. SEDIVY
Star Staff Reporter

Whitestown, Ind. — On the east side of Barnes Street, the main road through this tiny Boone County town, three sturdy concrete buildings stand empty.

Not long ago, those structures housed a hardware store, a tavern and a private laboratory.

But now, streets need patching and the sewer system requires repairs.

Whitestown has problems and town leaders say there is little interest here in solving them.

They even wonder whether or not the town's government should continue to exist.

DISBANDING THIS rural community, which was founded in the 1850s, will be discussed during a special town board meeting Tuesday at the Whitestown American Legion Hall.

Clerk-treasurer Janie L. Ambers, for one, doesn't want the town to fold.

Water and sewer rates would

probably skyrocket if town utilities are sold to a private company. The condition of the streets, which would then be under county rule, won't improve. Dissolving the town won't attract businesses, either.

Besides, "unincorporating" isn't easy.

Petitions must be signed, debts must be paid and a majority of voters must approve the action.

"BUT IF people have given up, why bother having a town?" Mrs. Ambers asked.

Apathy is nothing new here.

Attendance at monthly town board meetings is sparse. Residents not only avoid making positive suggestions, they rarely complain, Mrs. Ambers said.

When current town board members were elected in 1981, it was the first election the town had held in more than a decade. In the previous 10 years, no one was interested in running.

Again this November, there will be no local elections. Mrs. Ambers and town board members, John J.

Ambers and David A. Adams, have had enough. And no one else has expressed interest in running.

WHAT CAUSED this attitude to develop?

Town morale dropped significantly when the Whitestown school was shut down in 1967, said Janice West, a Whitestown postal clerk and unofficial town historian.

"The hub of the community was the school. It was a source of pride and the big topic of conversation. When the school closed, people seemed to lose interest in the town," Mrs. West said.

Whitestown schoolchildren are now bused to Lebanon High School and a consolidated Perry-Worth Township grade school.

Whitestown suffered another blow in the late 1960s when the trains stopped running through town. When the railroad pulled out, so did the grain elevator and lumberyard.

SINCE THEN, other businesses, including a drugstore, a lawn-mower distributor and two grocery stores, have left town.

During the last 20 years, more

homes have been torn down than have been constructed. Although the town is located close to Indianapolis, growth has been retarded because no major state or federal highways run through town, Mrs. Ambers said.

Mrs. Ambers said the lack of development in Whitestown is frustrating people to a point where they refuse to get involved.

No growth also means no new sources of revenue. That makes municipal problems more difficult to solve. This year, the town budget was only \$39,000.

"WE'RE NOT in the red but we just can't do much with what we have," Mrs. Ambers said. "By the time we pay the marshal and buy his gas, there's nothing left. We just keep going; we can't get ahead on anything."

But without support and input from townfolk, no problems will be solved, Mrs. Ambers said.

"What can we do about our problems if the town's not behind us?" she asked. "I'm not sure this meeting will do any good but if nothing else, it will get us together to talk."











