

Retired veterinarian restores only school his father knew in hopes it can serve children again

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MUNCIE — These days, the only thing missing from Corinth School is students.

This one-room school house, built in 1875, is at Delaware County Roads 400-S and 200-W, about a half mile from Ind. 67.

It's one of the few school houses of its kind left in the nation.

Inside, there are rows of desks. A lesson on one of the blackboards reads: "The big blue bug bit a big black bear."

Thing is, the school hasn't seen any students in more than 80 years.

Norman Miller, who lives just down the road from the school, hopes to change that.

Miller and his wife, Hermie, bought schoolhouse No. 3 about 7 years ago.

"It looked awful," Miller said, holding up an older photo of the building, half of the roof torn off by a wicked storm.

"The windows were gone," he said. "So were the shutters."

The supports in the floor needed to be rebuilt. The blackboards were missing, too.

But Miller also had pictures of what it looked like in the late 1800s.

"This is the only school my father went to," said Miller, a retired veterinarian, while holding up another photo, this one a class picture in front of the simple brick building. "There are so many people who have memories of this school."

The school was closed around 1910.

For a while it had a toll building next to it. (It was moved from Ind. 67.)

Landmark

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"Farmhands lived in it, I believe," Miller said. As for the school, it was used primarily for storage.

"And the Boy Scouts met here occasionally for a few years," Miller said.

The school was donated to the Delaware County Historical Alliance in 1992 by Helen Ross, and a parcel of land next to it was donated by Eleanor Miller.

But after a chunk of the school's roof blew off in a storm, the Alliance quickly realized that renovating this building was going to cost more than the group had to give.

That's when Miller and his wife offered to buy it and restore it as best they could.

"I thought it was worth it to try and save the building," he said.

The smile on his face proves it was worth the effort.

From photos, Miller was able to re-create the original shutters and windows. And when Wilson School was closed, he found enough slate to cover all five of the blackboards. He picked up desks from friends, neighbors and sales.

Miller said he would build restroom facilities separate from the schoolhouse. A new wooden fence already surrounds the school. A portion of the land to the west will be used as a parking lot.

In an Amish catalog he found antique-looking light fixtures for the inside. The wood floor is new, and the wood-burning stove in the

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Norman Miller

center of the room is similar to one used back then, but it's not attached to the chimney.

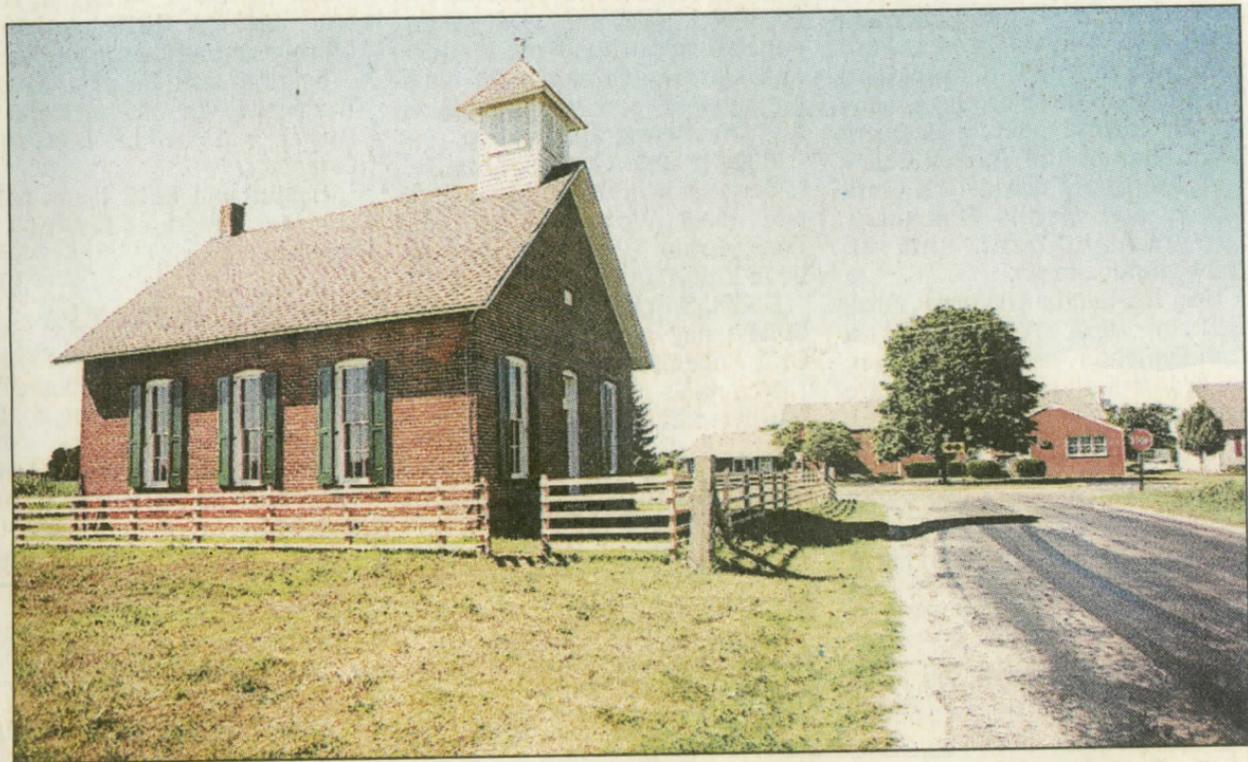
"It would have been too much of a liability if we have kids in here," Miller said, adding he had a gas furnace installed instead.

And that is his hope — that area kids can use and benefit from this little schoolhouse.

Miller envisions classes spending time in the school on a regular basis. "It would also be great to have a full-time teacher here," Miller said.

"I think it's important to preserve the past," he said. "I think from the past you can realize what worked for them and apply it to education today. Something about our education system is not working too well today. Perhaps there's something here that can be applied to make things work in the future."

Landmarks



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THE REAL DEAL: The old Corinth School, built in 1875, is at Delaware County Roads 400-S and 200-W, about a half-mile from Ind. 67. The school is owned by Norman Miller and his wife, Hermie.

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