

MEMORIES

BOONE GROVE, INDIANA

1843 TO 2003

BY

SHARON ROESKE

A few months ago, while I was visiting my in-laws, a conversation started about Boone Grove. I can't quite remember how it started, but the main topic of the conversation was my father-in-law's memories as he grew up in Boone Grove. The conversation ended when I said someone should be writing all this stuff down. As you can tell it wasn't the end - it was the beginning.

I chose to use as many photographs as I could possibly find. As they say "a picture is worth a thousand words". But to me, this book is incomplete. I am still missing some pictures of buildings that played a part in Boone Grove's history. In case you are wondering, I am still looking for pictures of Boone Grove Train Depot, Chester, Inc. Fertilizer Plant, Ludington's Grocery Store and Harvey Shurr's car dealership.

I have spent the last three months compiling all the information I could about the village of Boone Grove. I have talked to numerous people about their memories of their lives in Boone Grove. I spent several days at libraries, historical societies and on the Internet. I borrowed lots of photographs, newspaper clippings, yearbooks, atlases, and other reference materials. However, the time has come to bring the first edition of this book to an end.

I am quite sure that everything in this book is **NOT** 100% accurate. But it is the best that I can do at this time. Please feel free to offer corrections, more detailed information, and your thoughts about this publication.

Sharon Roeske
Feb. 28, 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WHAT'S IN A NAME

BALTIMORE / BOONE GROVE

THE EARLY SCHOOLS

BOONE GROVE SCHOOLS

BOONE GROVE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

BOONE GROVE FIRE DEPARTMENT

THE RAILROAD AND THE BRIDGE

CHESTERS, THE ELEVATOR, AND THE
BLACKSMITH SHOP

THE OLD STORES

BOONE GROVE BUSINESSES

BITS & PIECES

REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

BALTIMORE, BOONE GROVE AND JUMBO

In my research about Boone Grove the following three names kept popping up; Baltimore, Boone Grove and Jumbo. So I thought I would let you know the importance of these names.

I never did find out why the town of Boone Grove was previously called Baltimore. At this point I still don't know why, or when, or even who named this place Baltimore. Occasionally, in my reading of books, I would come across the statement that simply said Boone Grove was once called Baltimore.

The name of Boone Grove came from the old tale that Daniel Boone slept in a grove of trees over in Merriman's woods. This information was found in newspaper articles or articles written by people living in the area. When reading the chronicles of Daniel Boone there wasn't any mention of him coming this far north into Indiana. But, I am not the one who is going to say it is not true.

The name Jumbo has a more interesting but sadder story. J. B. Woods supposedly liked the elephant Jumbo so much that he named the post office and railroad depot after him. The name only lasted about six weeks when it was changed back to Boone Grove. Jumbo, the elephant, was owned by P.T. Barnum and was purchased from a zoo in England for \$10,000. Not too long after Jumbo came to America, he was hit by a train and killed.

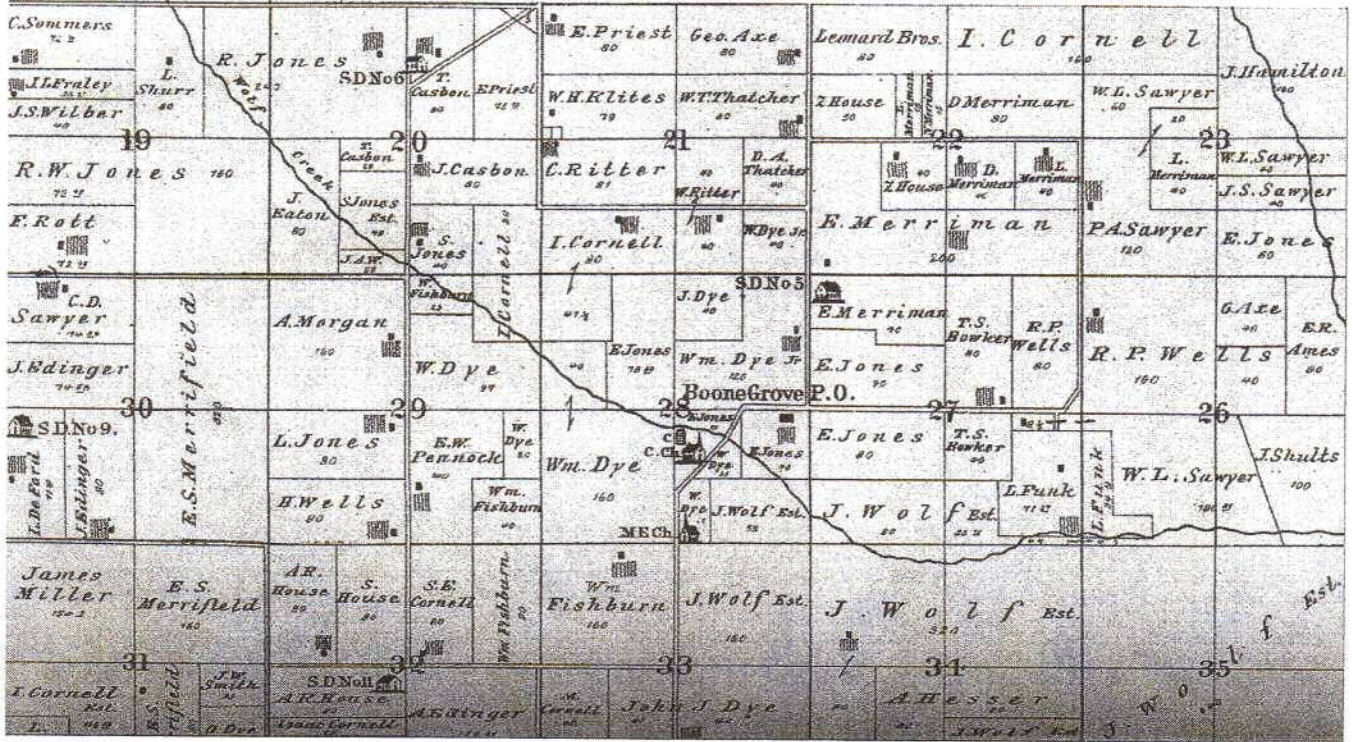


JUMBO

BALTIMORE

BOONE GROVE

Once called Baltimore the original town of Boone Grove was established in 1843. The little town was settled along Wolf Creek. In 1843 the main street of Boone Grove was located on what is now 450 South.



This map from an 1876 Atlas clearly shows Boone Grove established in Merriman's Woods.

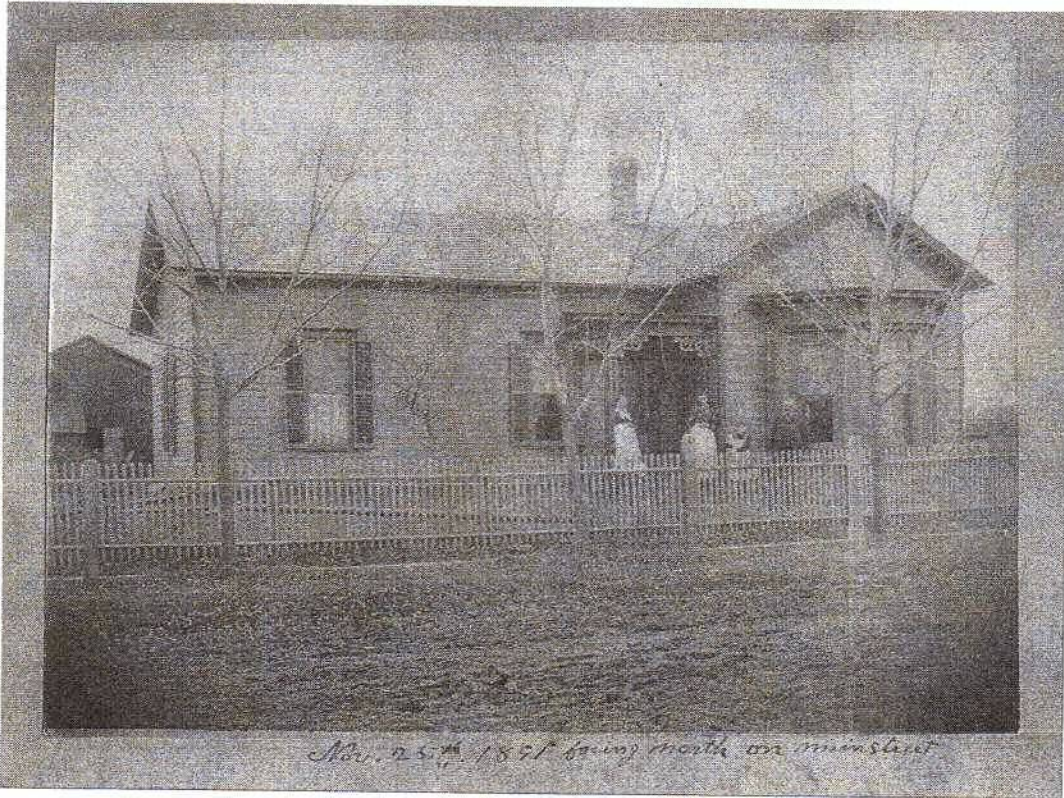
The Boone Grove Christian Church was built in 1856. It was located just east of Merriman's Cemetery. About one half mile south of the Christian Church was a Methodist Church.



Merriman's Cemetery

In 1857 Joseph Janes opened a store in the original town of Boone Grove.

Enoch Jones was the postmaster in 1867 and had the post office in his house. The house still stands at 202 West 450 South and is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Roland Baird.



When the Chicago and Atlantic railroad came through Porter Township in 1881 the town moved over by the railroad tracks.

THE EARLY



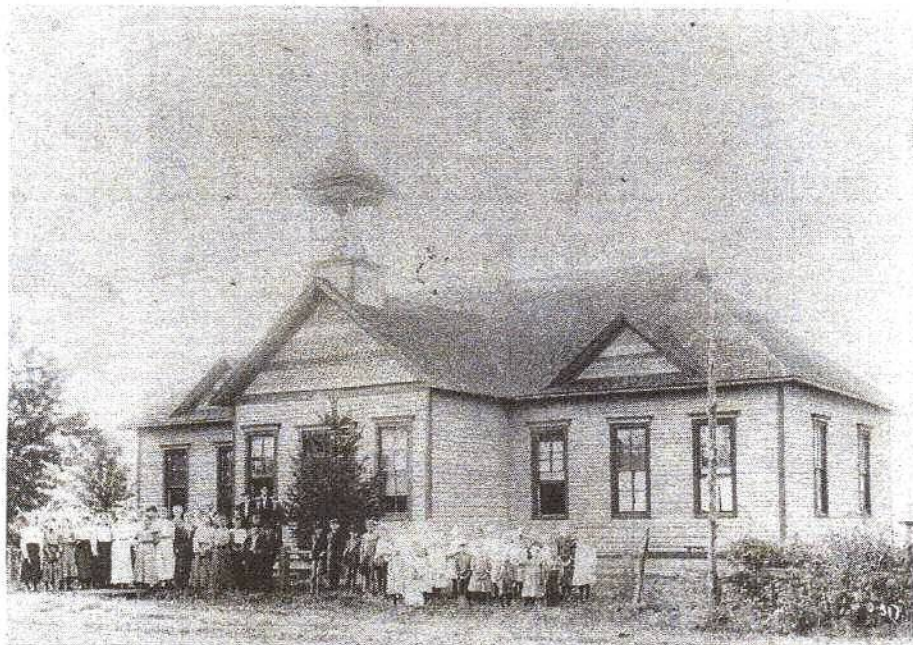
SCHOOLS

At one time in the Porter Township
School History there were 11 different
schools listed. The list included the
following schools:

1

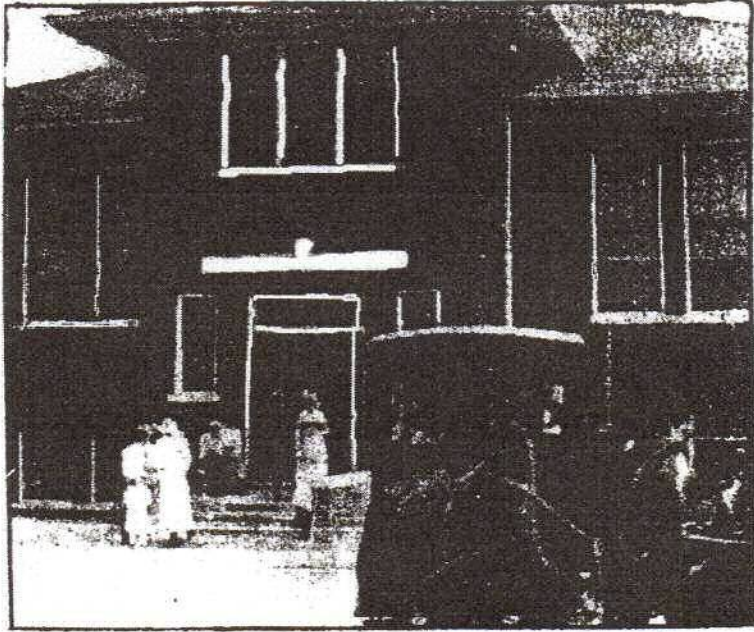
- District #1. Cobb School
- District #2. Gates School
- District #3. Quinn School
- District #4. Jones School
- District #5. Merriman School
- District #6. Kenworthy School
- District #7. Porter Cross Roads School
- District #8. Beech School
- District #9. Hurlburt School
- District #10. Skinner School
- District #11. Boone Grove School

Most of the schools were one room
school houses with benches and desks
around the outer edge of the room, with
a stove in the center.

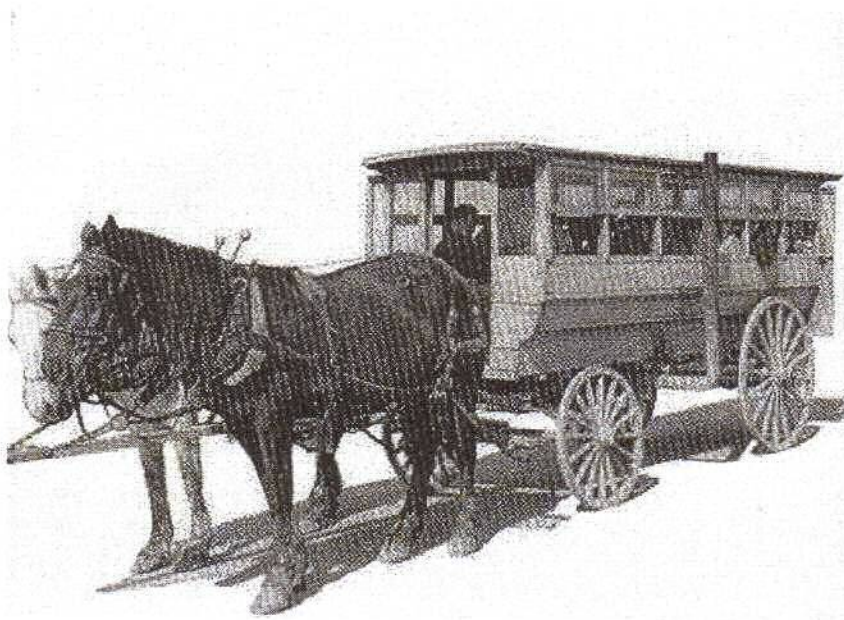


In the first edition of this book these two schools were unidentified. Now, it might be possible that the picture of the school on the bottom was the first school in Boone Grove and was located on the west side of the bridge between what was Lawrence Ludington's house and Freda Benton's house. The picture of the school on the top could be the same school. Information was found that the school was moved to where the original 1913 brick building was built and then remodeled.





This is a picture of Porter Cross Roads School taken in the 1920's. If a student lived less than a mile from the school they would have to walk to get to school. Others would ride in a horse drawn school bus that could carry 15 students and was heated by a stove.



By 1911 - 1912 the schools had been consolidated down to nine.

4

- NO. 1 Cobb School
- NO. 2 Gates School
- NO. 4 Kenworthy School
- NO. 5 Merriman School
- NO. 7 Porter Cross Roads School
- NO. 8 Beech School
- NO. 9 Hurlburt School
- NO. 10 Skinner School
- NO. 11 Boone Grove School - which included a three year high school



This picture was taken in 1912.

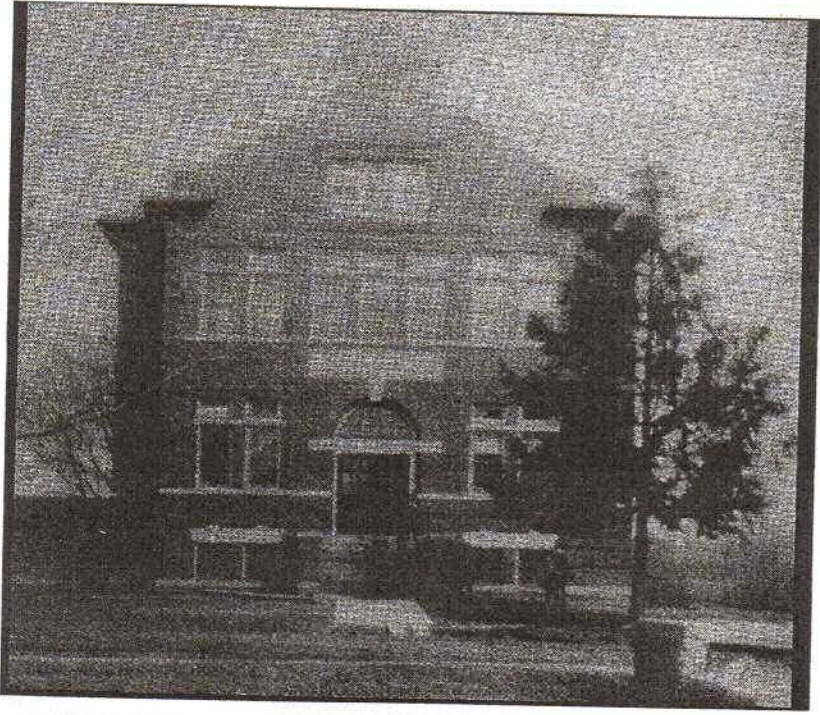
Extra curricular activities included boys and girls basketball, baseball, band, drama club, yell team and yearbook staff.



This photo shows the Boone Grove Band of 1909.



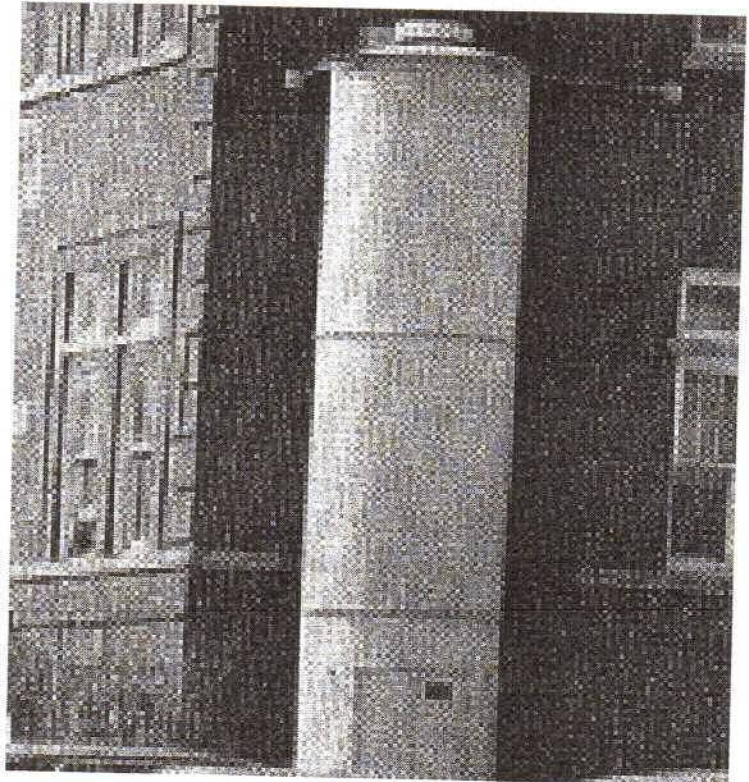
FROM
1913 TO 2003

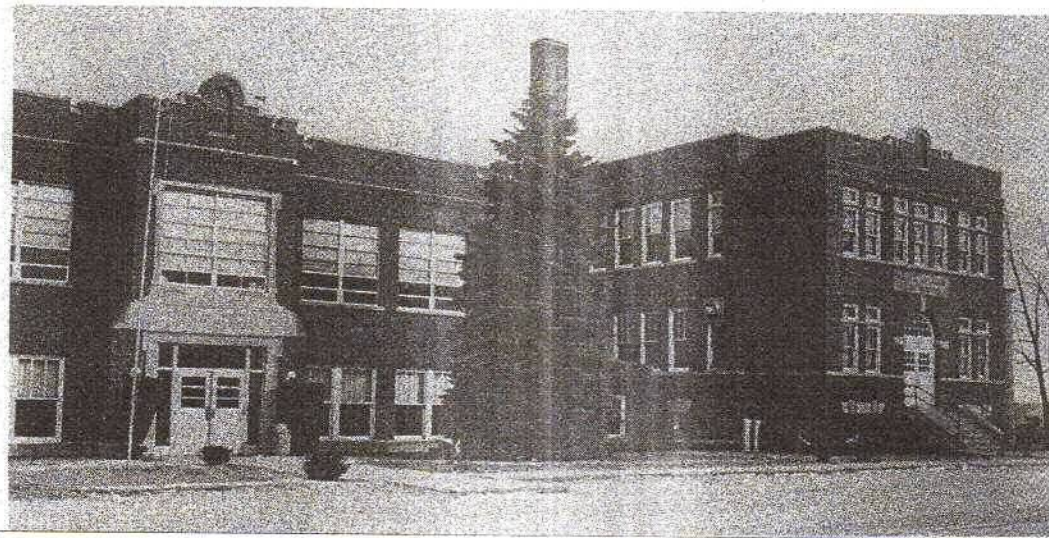


In 1913 a new school building was built in Boone Grove. This included a 4 year commissioned high school, intermediate grades, and primary grades.

A Parent Teacher Association (PTA) was organized at Boone Grove School in 1925. The following year the PTA paid for the installation of electric lights in the school.

In 1926 a fire escape was also added to the school. Installation took about 5 days.

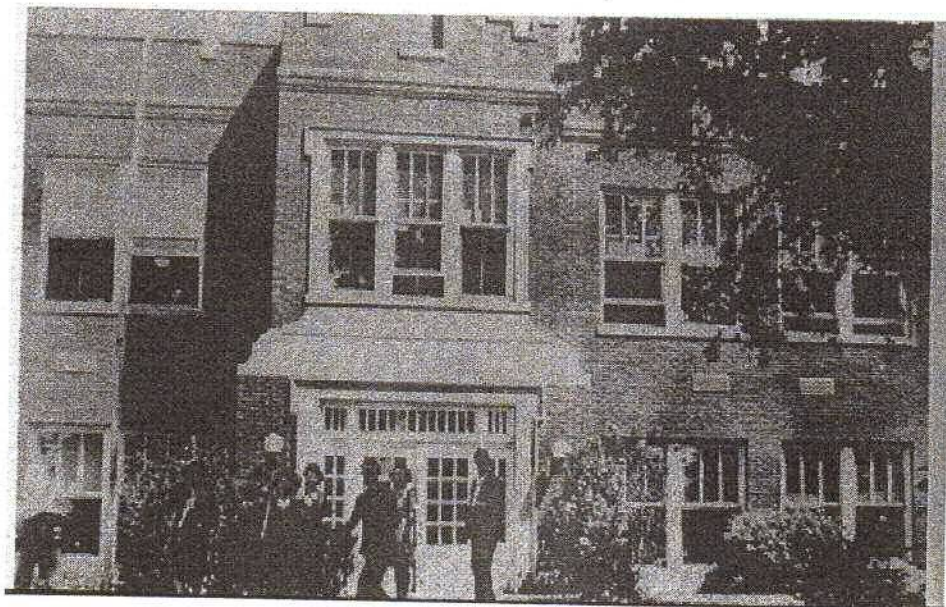




A new addition was added to the school in 1931. This included the school's first gym.



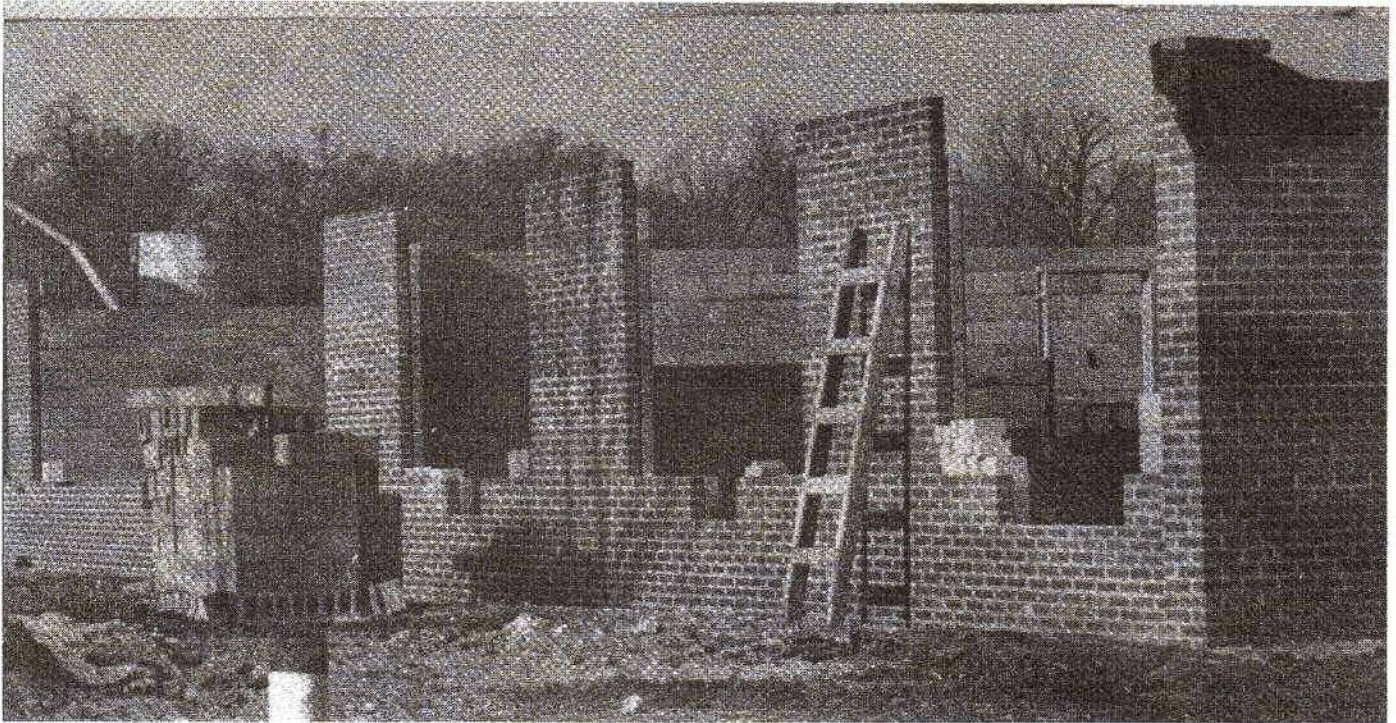
School buses get ready to take students home in 1938.



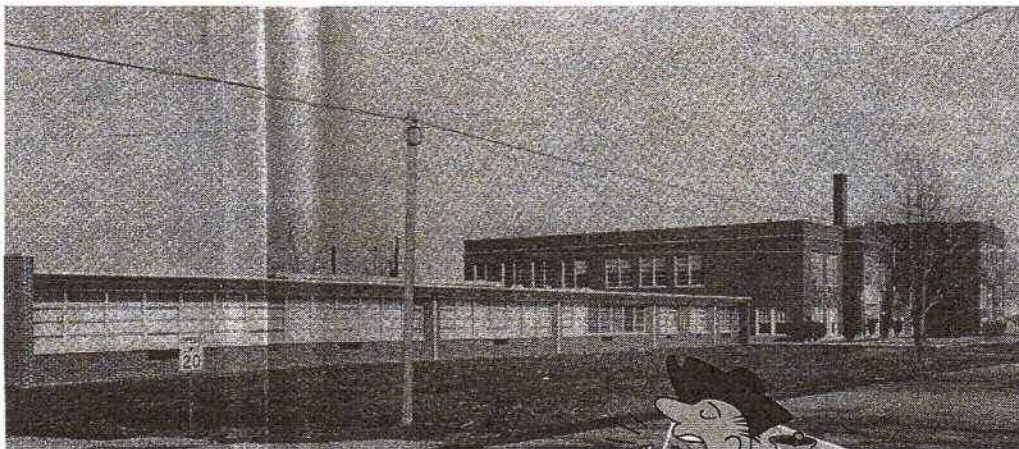
A picture of Boone Grove School in the summer of 1945.



Above is a picture of Boone Grove School before a new elementary school was built on in 1960.



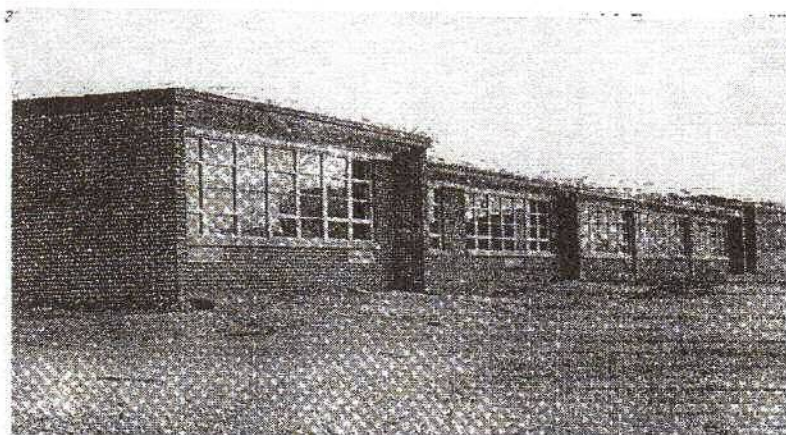
In 1960 a new elementary school was built on to the old school.



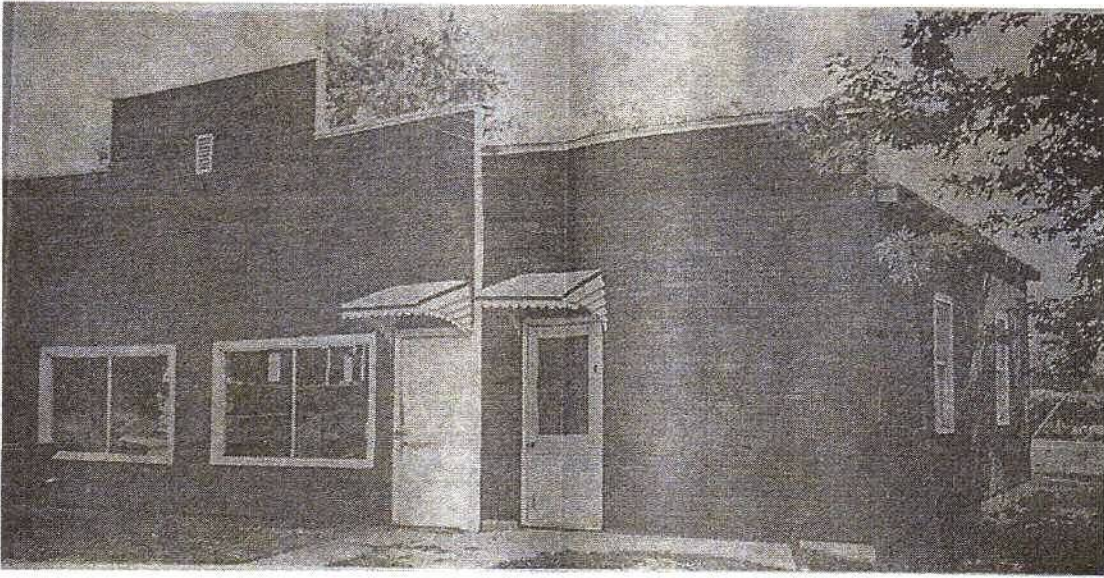
The newly completed elementary school in 1961.



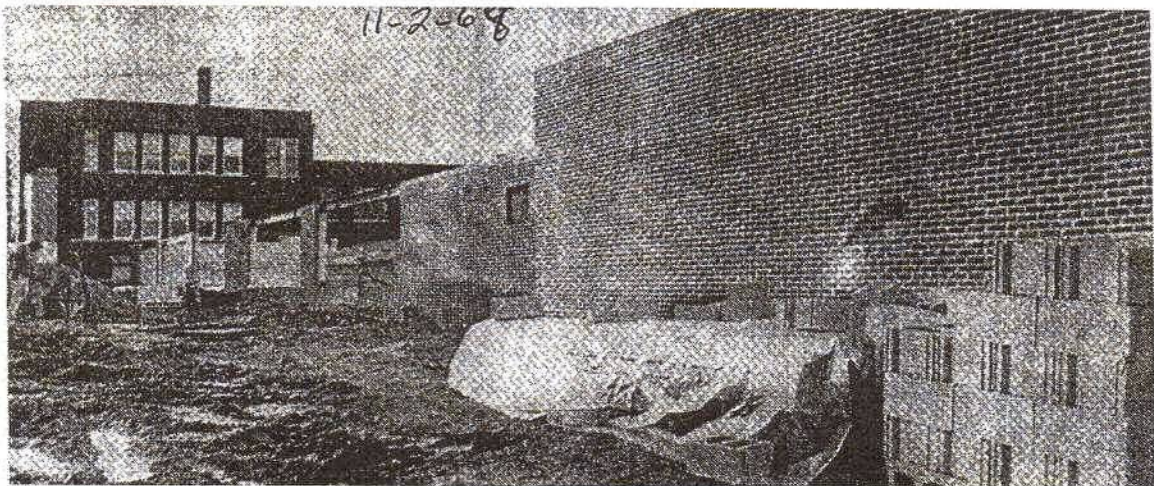
In 1966 another addition was added to the elementary school which included 5 classrooms, 2 restrooms, and a specialist room.



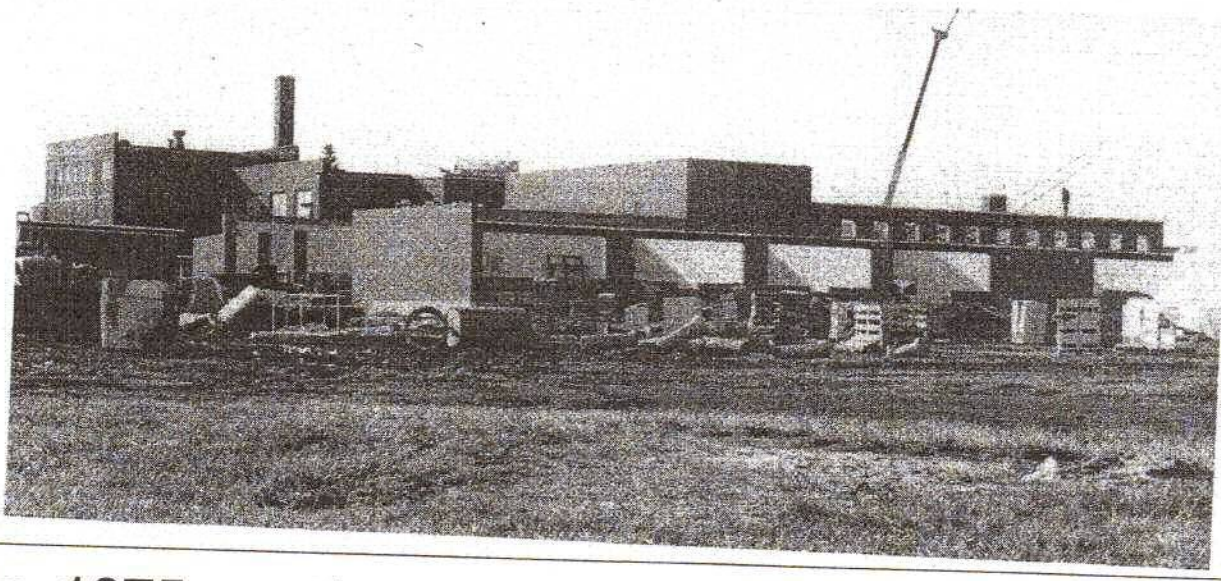
The completed 1966 addition to the Boone Grove Elementary School.



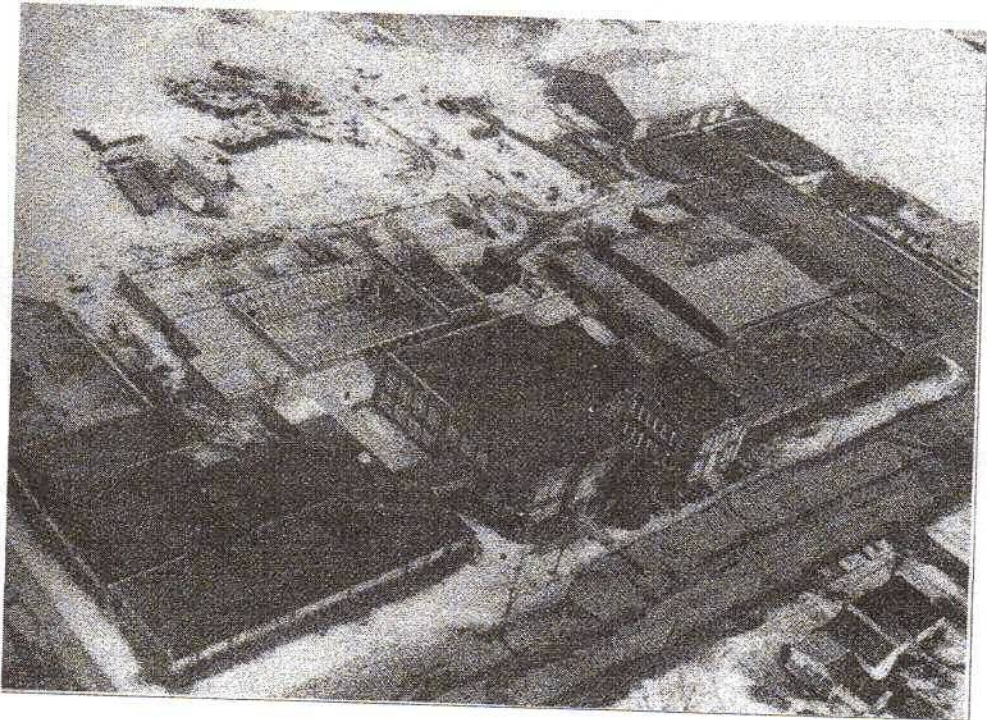
This building was used by the school. One half of the building was a shop and the other half was the band and music room. The building was located across from the school and is now a parking lot.



In 1969 a new addition was added to the high school. The addition included 4 classrooms, gym, office, science lab, shop, home ec. room, and band and music rooms.



In 1975 another addition was added to Boone Grove Jr./Sr. High School. This addition included 8 classrooms, library and cafetorium.



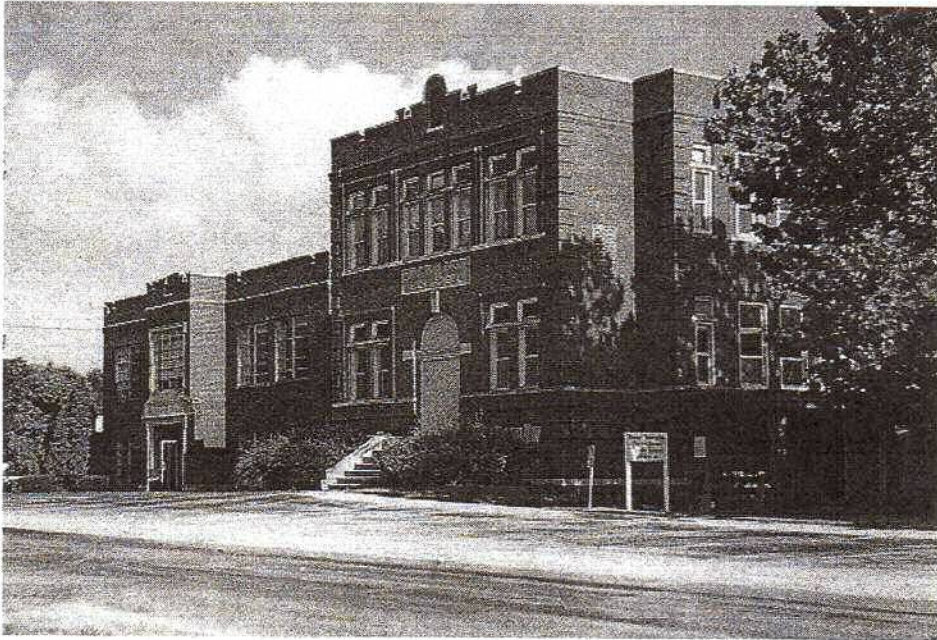
This a view from the air of the 1975 addition.



The 1913
wing of the
Boone
Grove
School
catches fire
in 1981.



OUT
WITH
THE
OLD..

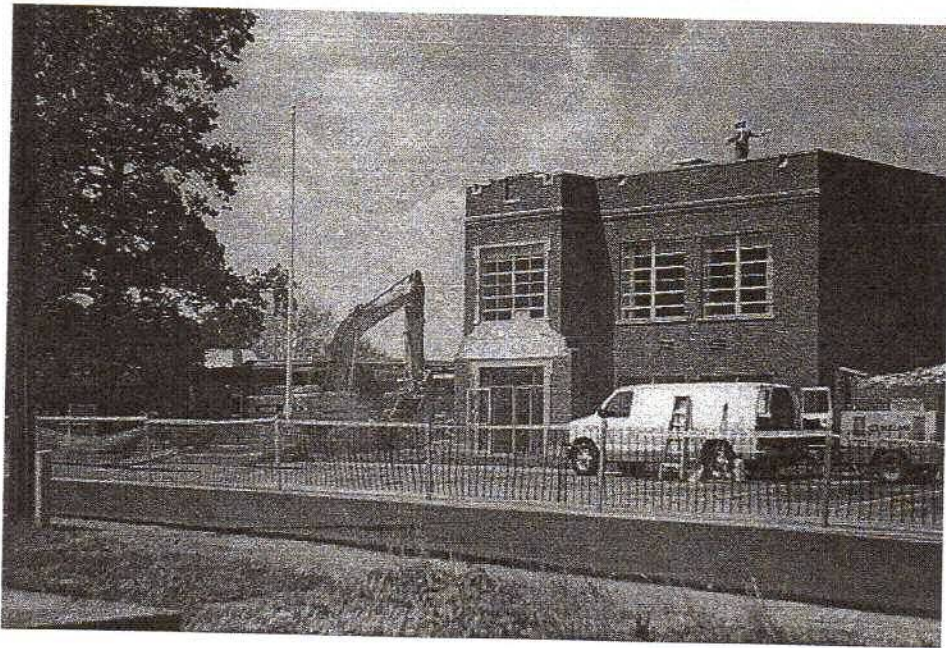


The old Boone Grove High School located in Boone Grove, Indiana.



The new Boone Grove High School opened in 1995 and is located on State Road 2.

IN
WITH
THE
NEW.

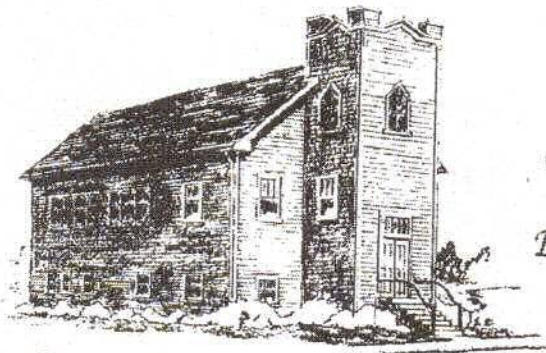


In 1999 the 1913 wing and the 1935 wing on the old Boone Grove High School was demolished to make way for renovation.



THE HISTORY OF THE BOONE GROVE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

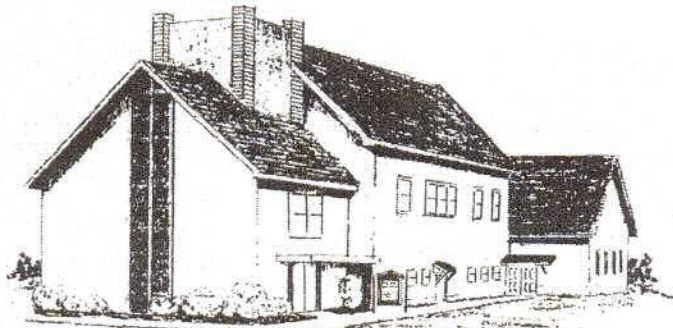
*Boone Grove
Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Founded 1852
Boone Grove, Indiana*



Dedicated June - 1928



*Dedicated
February - 1889*



Remodeled - 1963

FOUNDED 1852 BOONE GROVE, INDIANA

The Boone Grove Christian Church was founded by W.M.Dye and David Merriman in 1852.

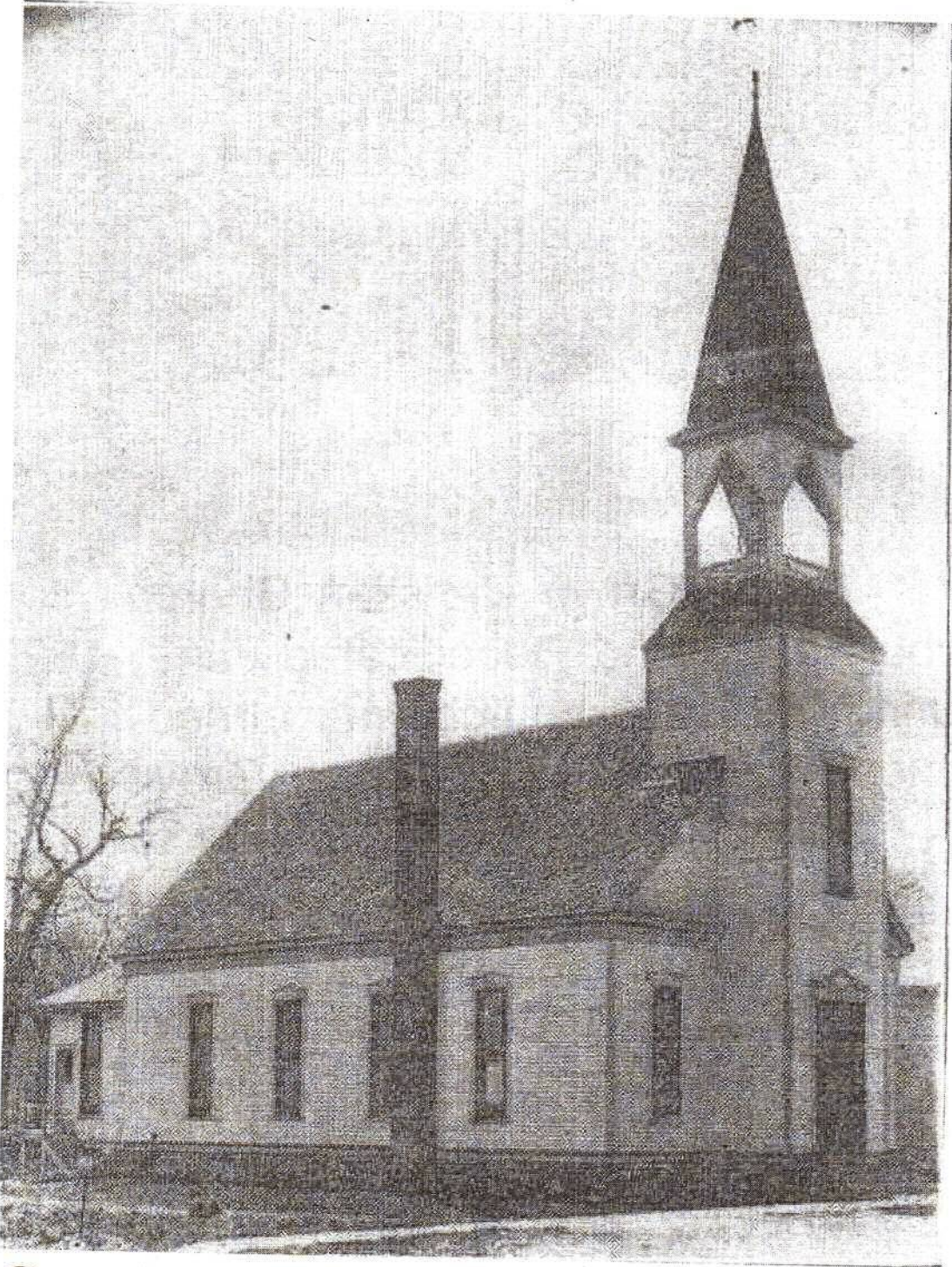
After meeting in private homes, a barn and a school the church builds its first sanctuary just east of Merriman's Cemetery in the year of 1856.

In 1889 the Boone Grove Christian Church builds its second sanctuary south of the Chicago and Atlantic railroad, in the town we now know as Boone Grove.

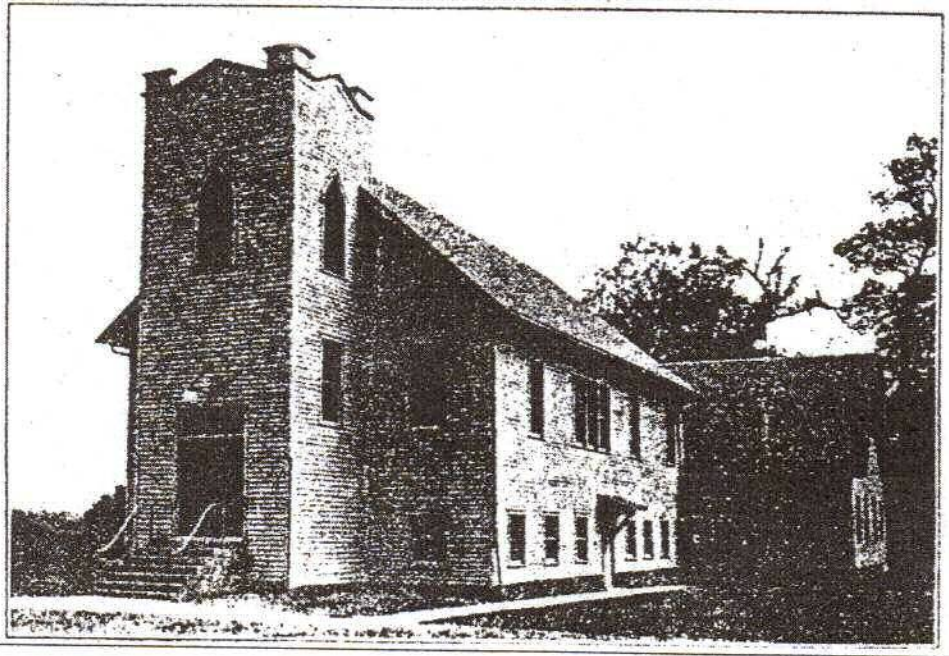
Around 1900 the first church was sold and moved to Boone Grove. It was put just east of Boone Grove's current post office.

In 1916 the community bought back the old church and moved it again. This time it was put next to the second Christian Church.

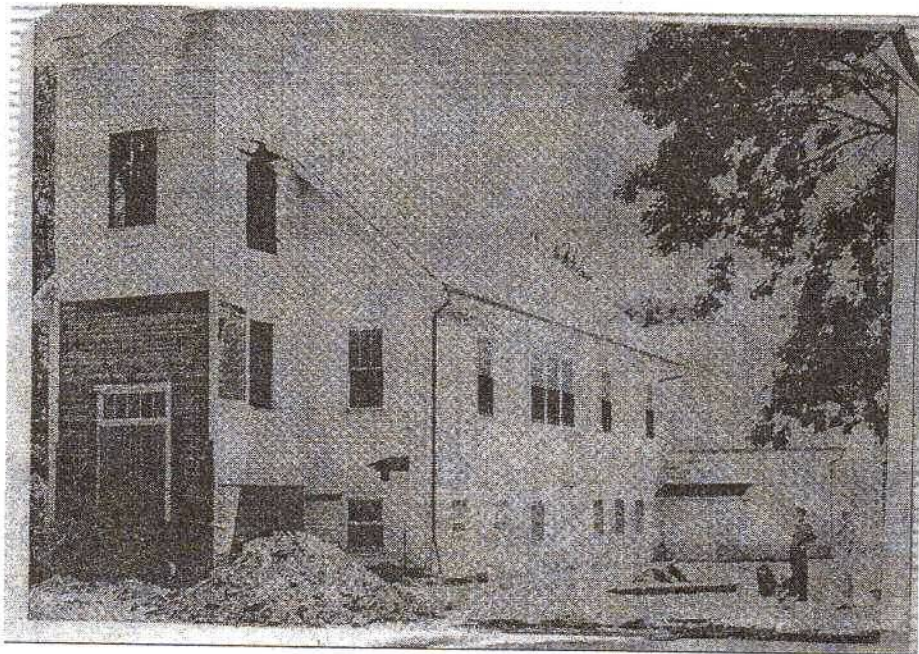
In 1921 the hall was remodeled as a community gathering place and served as a gym for basketball games.



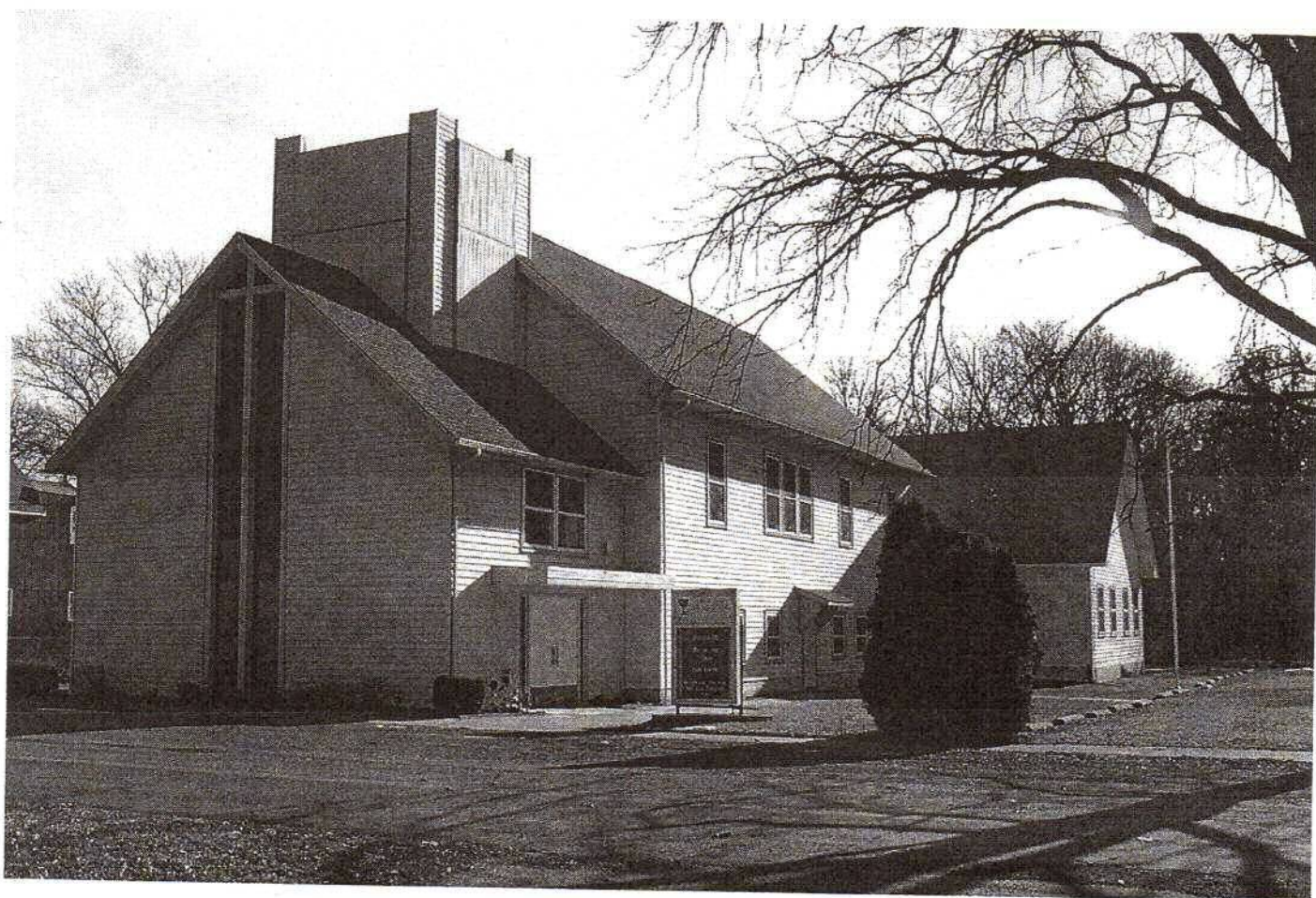
On April 14, 1927 the Boone Grove Christian Church burned down.



Boone Grove Christian Church
Rebuilt 1928 and Rededicated June, 1928.
During 1932 the church was turned into a
school while the 1913 Boone Grove High
School was being added on to.



Boone Grove Christian Church - being
remodeled in 1963



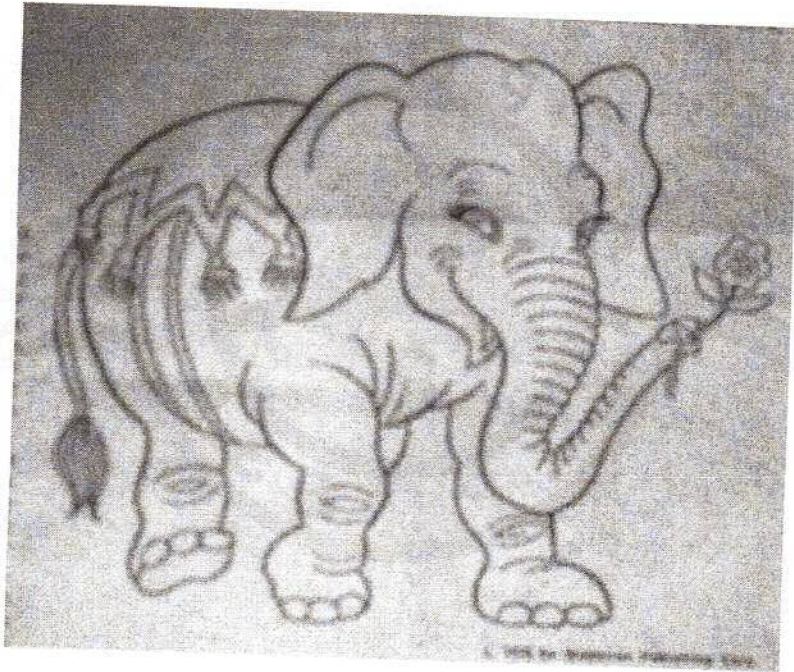
This is a picture of the Boone Grove Christian Church as of Jan. 2003.

BOONE GROVE POSTAL SERVICE



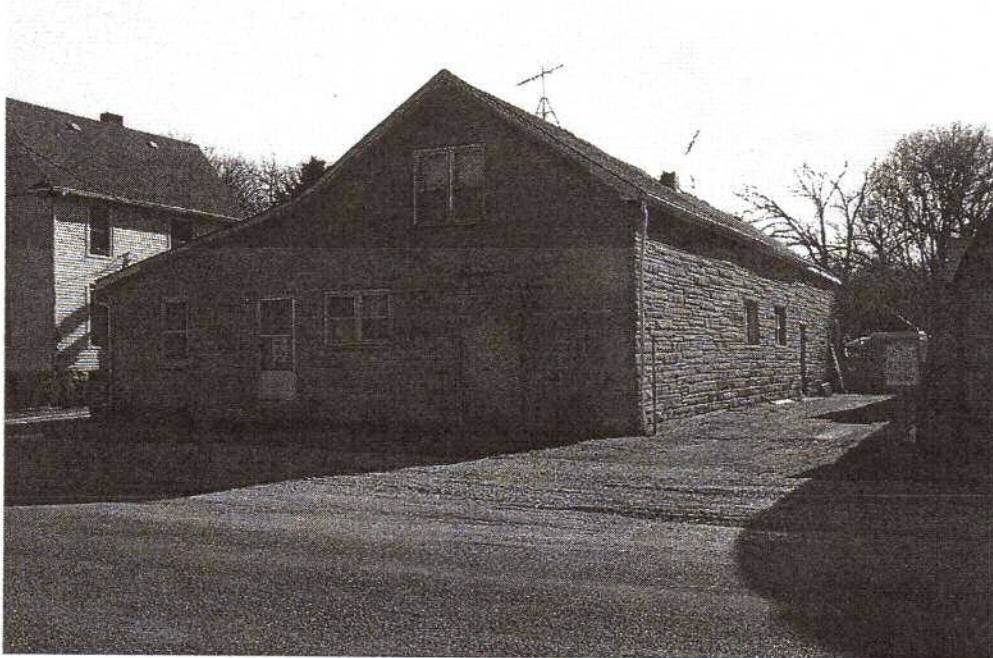
1883 TO 2003

Jefferson B. Woods was the first postmaster in the Boone Grove we know today. On June 5, 1883 J. B. Woods was granted the right to establish a new post office by the name of Jumbo on the Chicago and Atlantic railroad. A little over one month later the name of Jumbo was changed to Boone Grove.



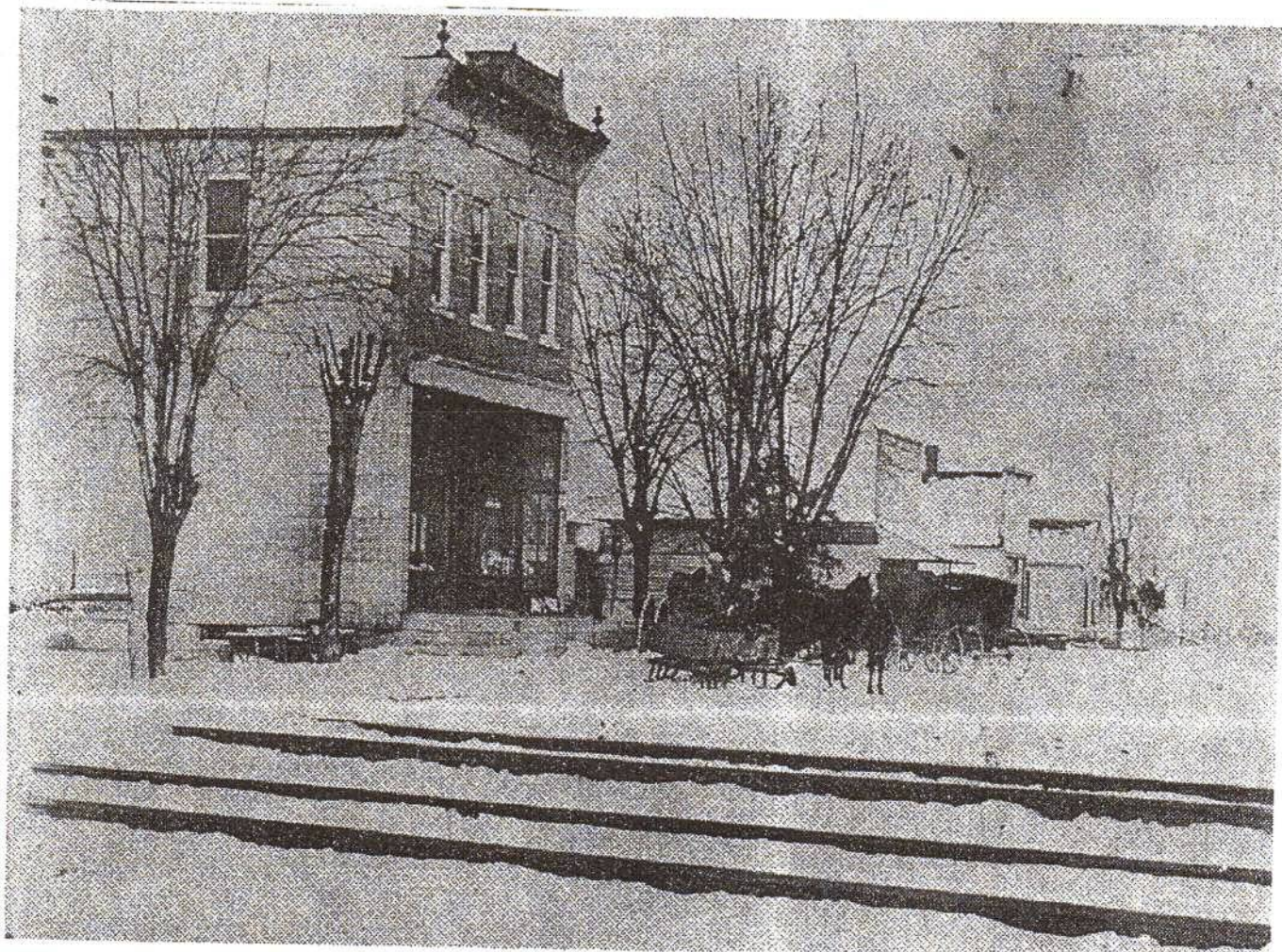
When J.B. Woods was postmaster, the post office was located in his hardware store on the southside of the railroad tracks. At this time the original town of Boone Grove was located about a mile north in Merriman's woods.

This building was once the hardware store of Jefferson B. Woods. On several different occasions this building also housed the post office. When J.B. Woods no longer had a hardware store in the building it was used by the county highway department.



This is a current picture taken in 2003. The building still stands in Boone Grove and is used as apartments and are commonly known as the "Van Dan Apartments".

Over the next 43 years the postmaster's job changed several times. Between 1883 to 1920 the postmasters were Jefferson Woods, Hiram Wells, Melvin Foltz, back to J.B. Woods, then to Frederick Wittenberg, and back again to J.B. Woods. Finally the postmaster's job came to rest with Alfred (Freddie) Wittenberg the son of Frederick Wittenberg. From 1920 to 1949 Freddie Wittenberg was postmaster of Boone Grove and the post office was located in this building.



This picture was taken right after the store was built in 1908. The store was located at 550 South 350 West.

In 1949 Crawford Baker became postmaster and the post office was moved to this building. Crawford Baker was postmaster until 1959. Between 1959 and 1971 the following men were postmasters of Boone Grove, Marshall Baker, David Stanley, and Vernon Lawrence. In 1971 William Roeske became postmaster.



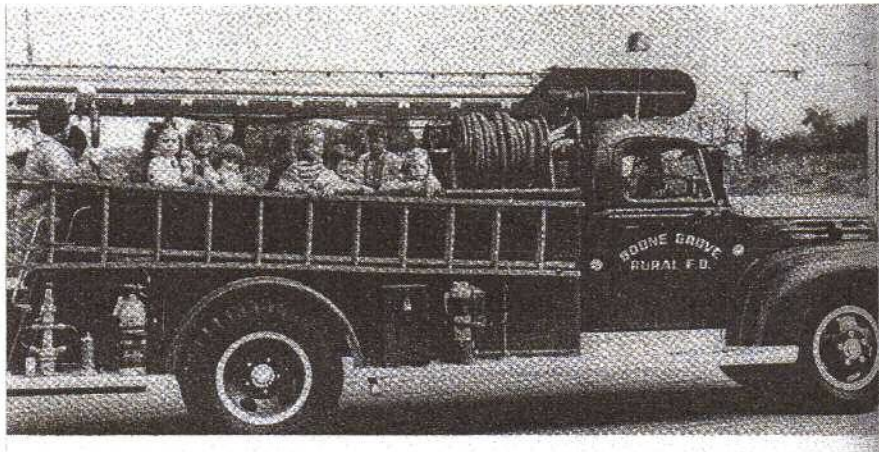
Bill Roeske stands in front of the Post Office in Boone Grove, In. Bill Roeske was postmaster when the location of the post office changed again.

In 1977 the post office was moved to this building. Bill Roeske stayed postmaster until 1986 when he died. Helen Kingery took over the postmaster's job for a few years, then Rachel Stanley became the postmaster. Mrs. Stanley is still postmaster today.



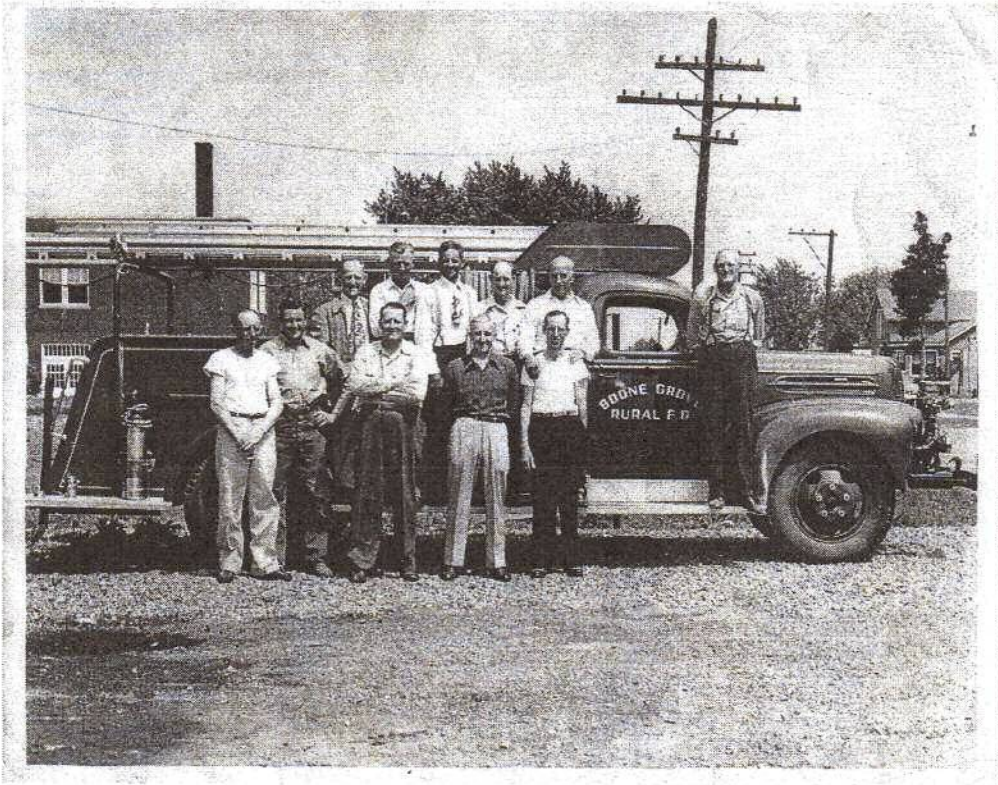
This building was at one time a blacksmith shop and hardware store built by Algot and Goldie Olson in 1937.

BOONE GROVE



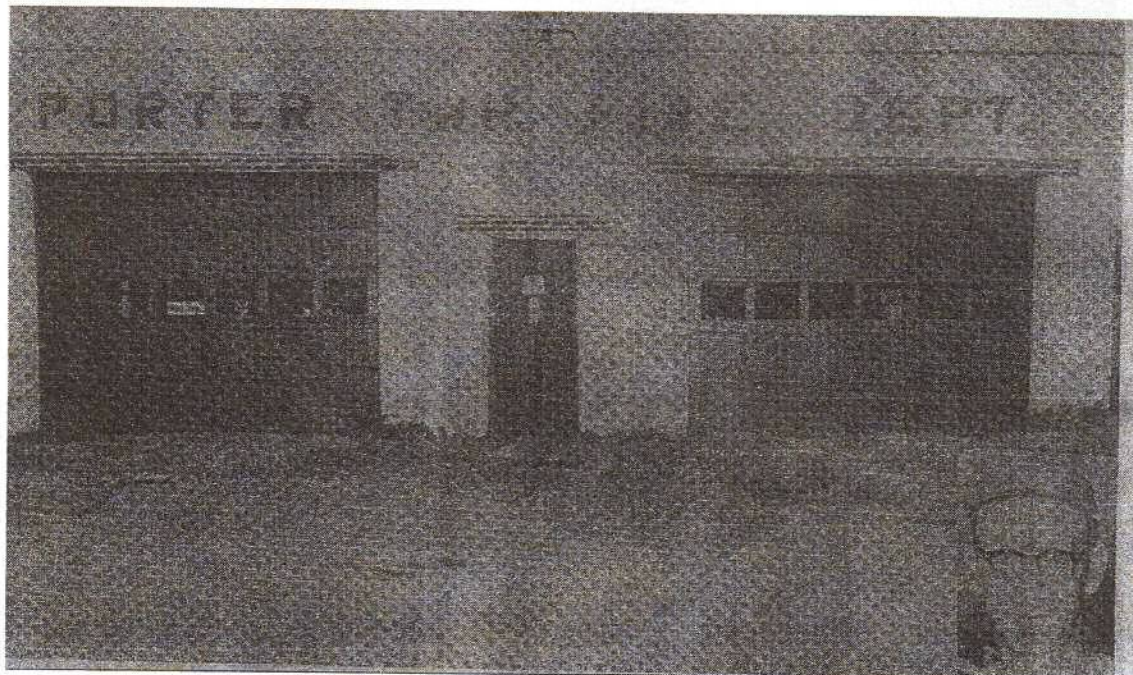
RURAL
FIRE
DEPARTMENT

The Boone Grove Fire Department was organized in 1946 by local farmers and businessmen.



In 1947 they purchased a 1946 American Fire Apparatus, 500 gallon per minute pumper mounted on a 1946 Ford. The truck was housed in a local blacksmith shop across the street from Boone Grove School.

In 1948 the farmers and businessmen built a 40 X 32 two bay fire station. One bay was used for the pumper and the other bay was used by a mechanic.



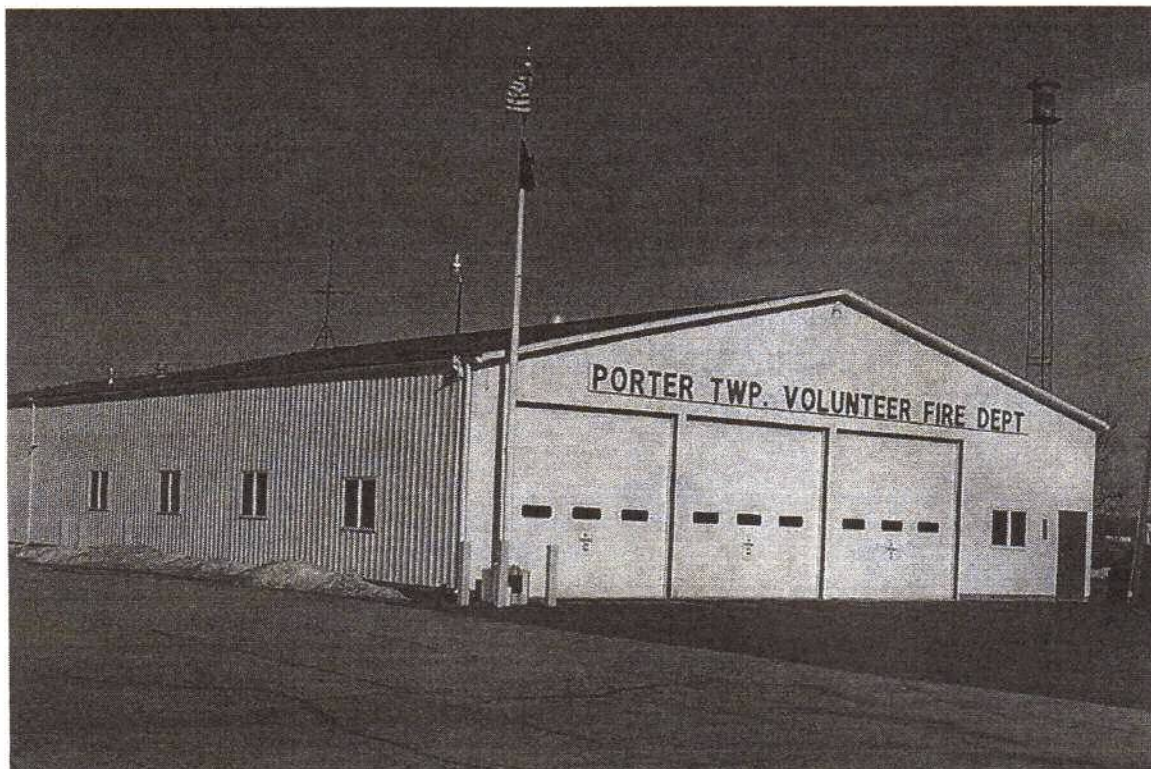
In 1954 the Boone Grove Fire Department was purchased by the township and became the Porter Township Fire Department. Buster Struble served as the first fire chief.



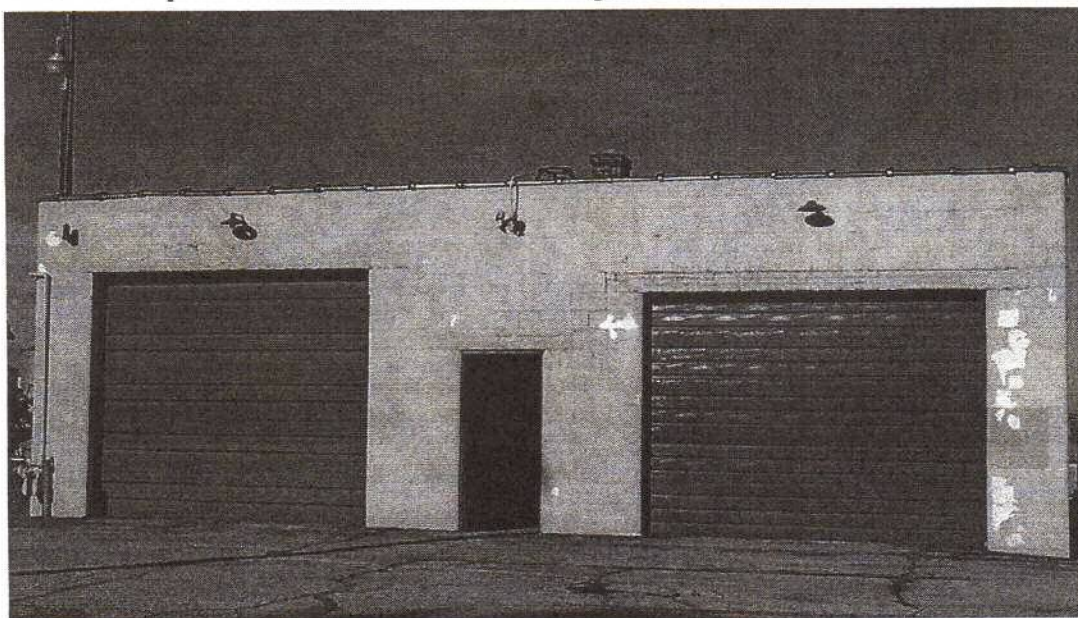
In 1970 a Dodge Power Wagon was purchased from Grieger Motors.



In 1971 the Porter Township Volunteer Fire Dept. consisted of (from left to right): a GMC 6 X 6 received from the Dept. of Natural Resources, the 1970 Dodge Power Wagon, 1946 Ford Pumper and a converted petroleum delivery truck.

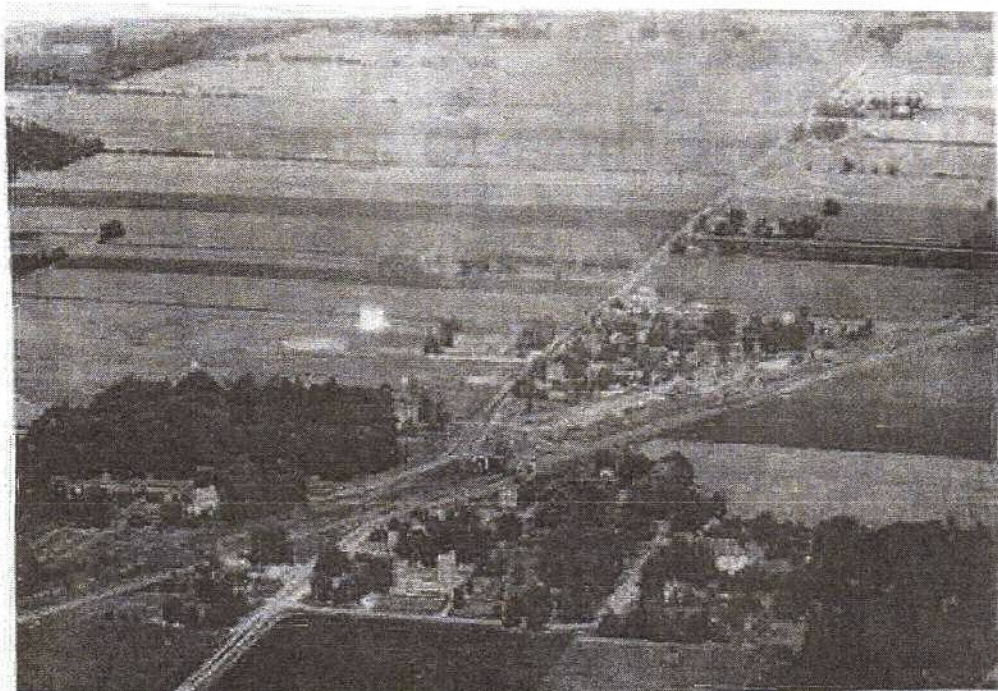


In 1972 a new 54 X 80 three bay fire station was built. In 1996 a 30 X 36 addition was added to the rear of the fire station. The picture shows the fire dept. as it is today in 2003.



The old fire department as it stands today in 2003. It is now being used by the Boone Grove School for storage.

THE RAILROAD

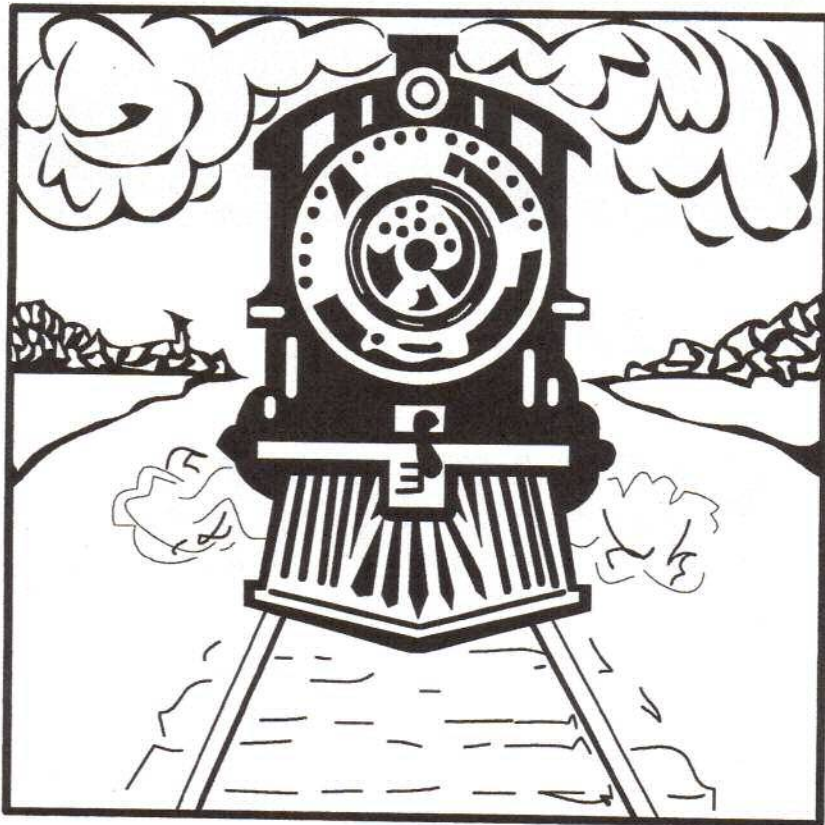


AND THE BRIDGE

In 1881 the Chicago & Atlantic 1
railroad laid a single train track
through the village of Boone Grove.

Shortly after the track came
through a railroad depot was built.

In 1890 the Chicago and Atlantic
railroad became the Chicago and
Erie railroad.

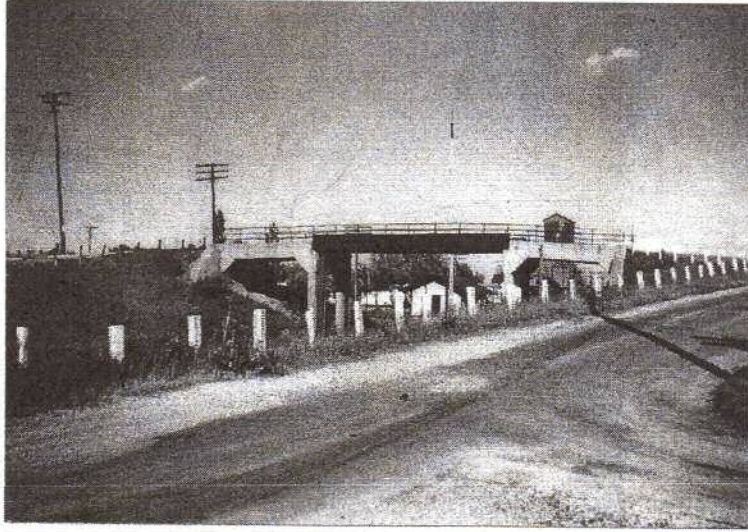


The railroad that came through 2
Boone Grove was now the Erie
railroad and in 1916 the Erie put
a double set of tracks with high
embankments on both sides.



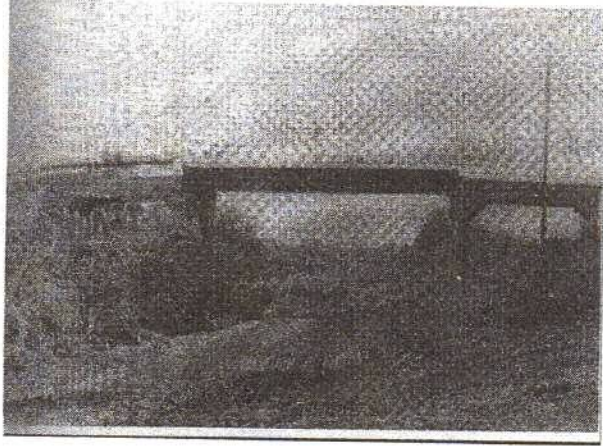
A bridge had to be constructed
over the tracks to connect both
sides of Boone Grove.

In 1960 the Erie, Delaware Lackawanna, and Western railroads became the Erie Lackawanna.



This picture was taken in the late sixties or early seventies. If you look close under the black bridge you can see the Boone Grove Train Depot.

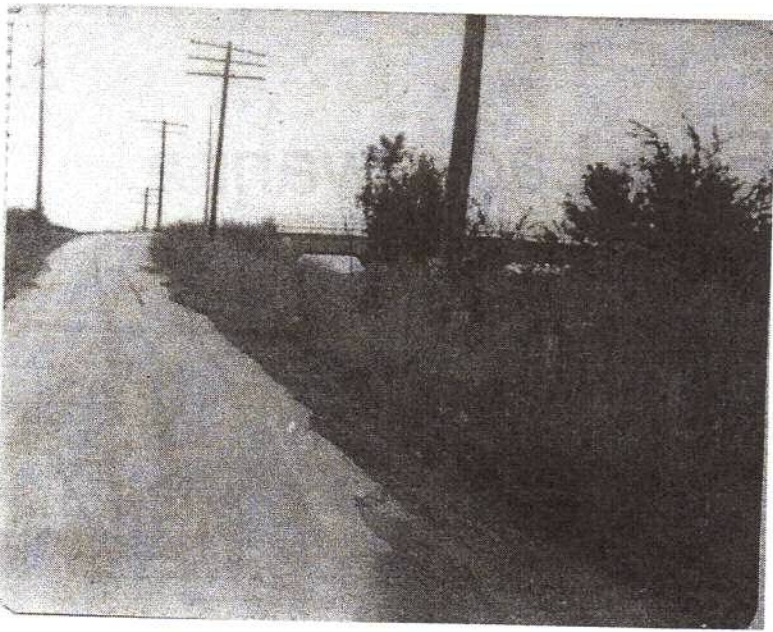
In 1976 the Erie Lackawanna became the Conrail.



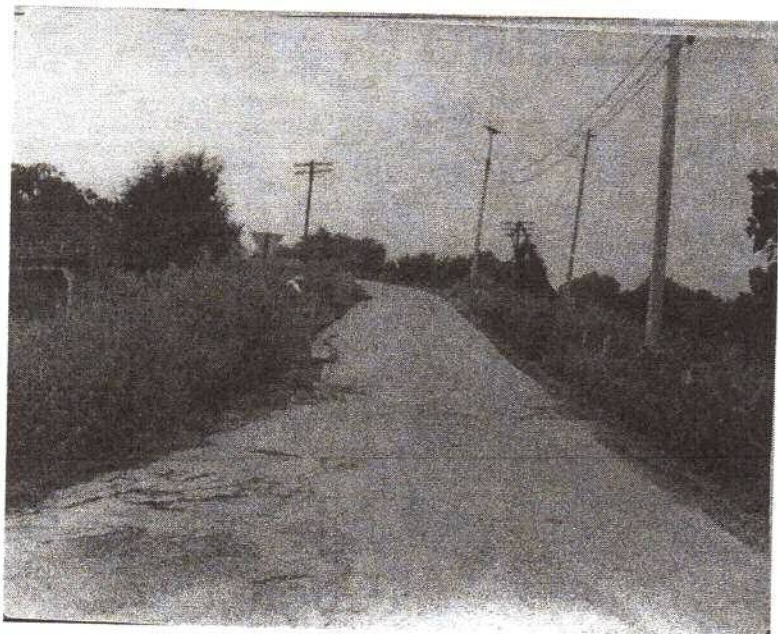
In 1982 the first set of tracks were sold to salvage and removed the same year.

The second set of tracks were removed around 1983.

THE

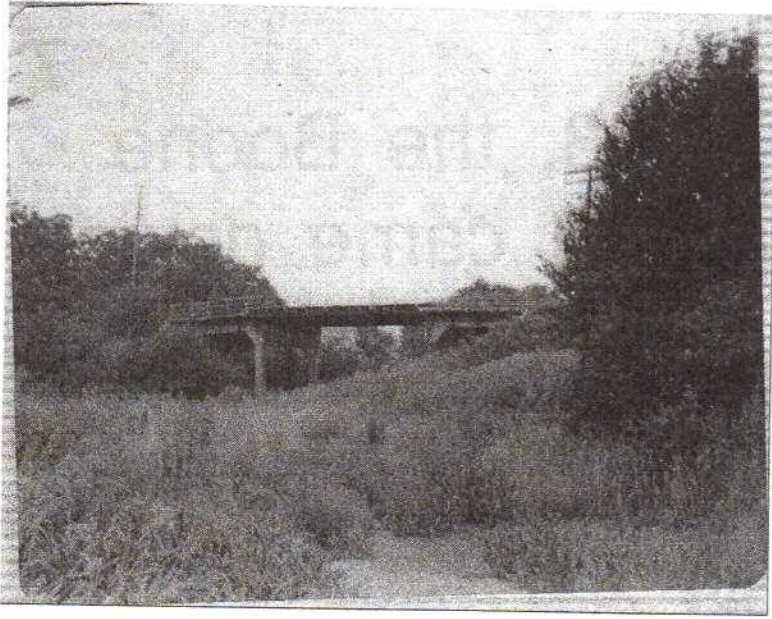


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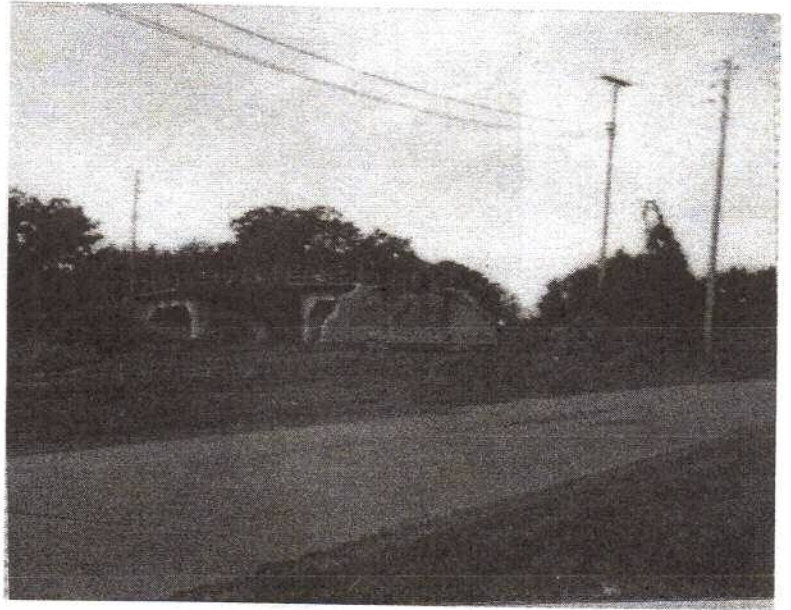


1916
to
1983

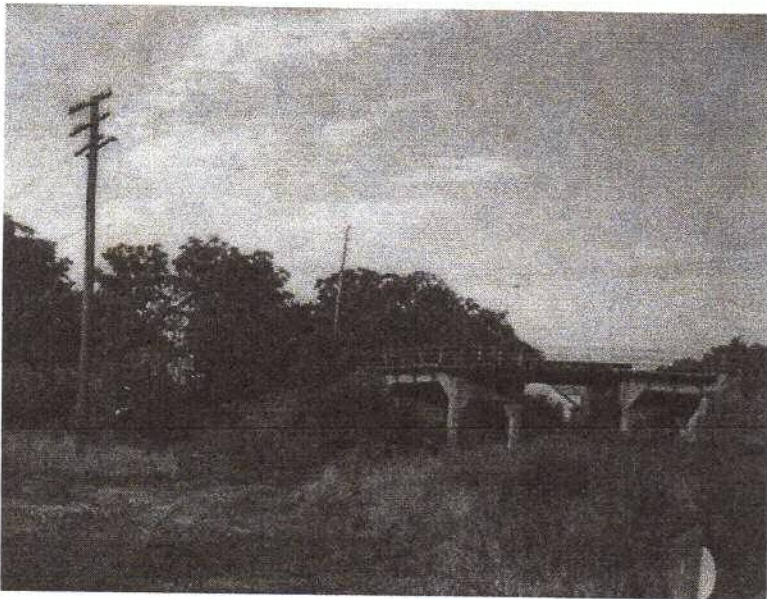
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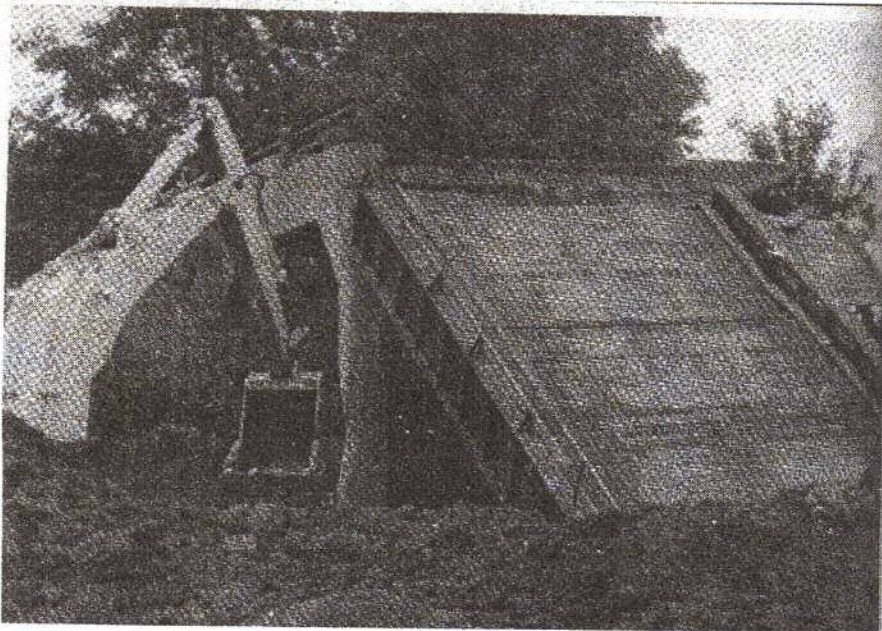
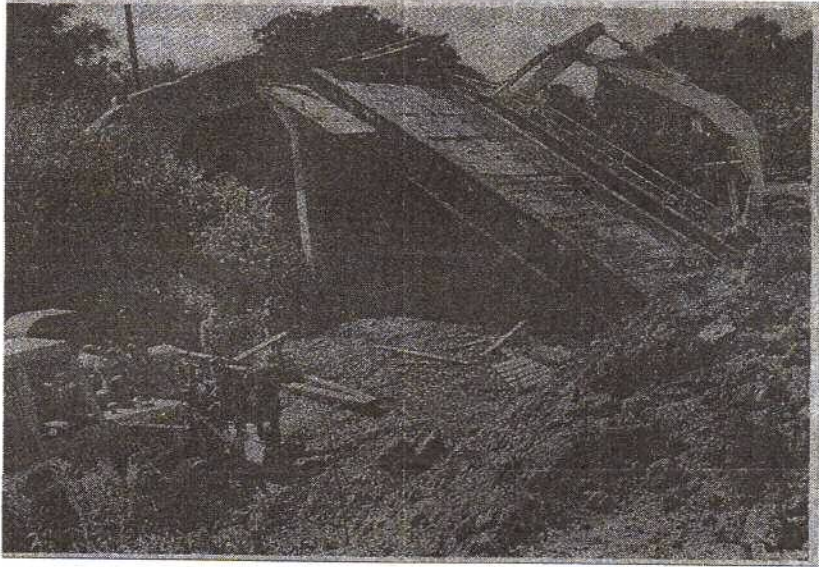
THE

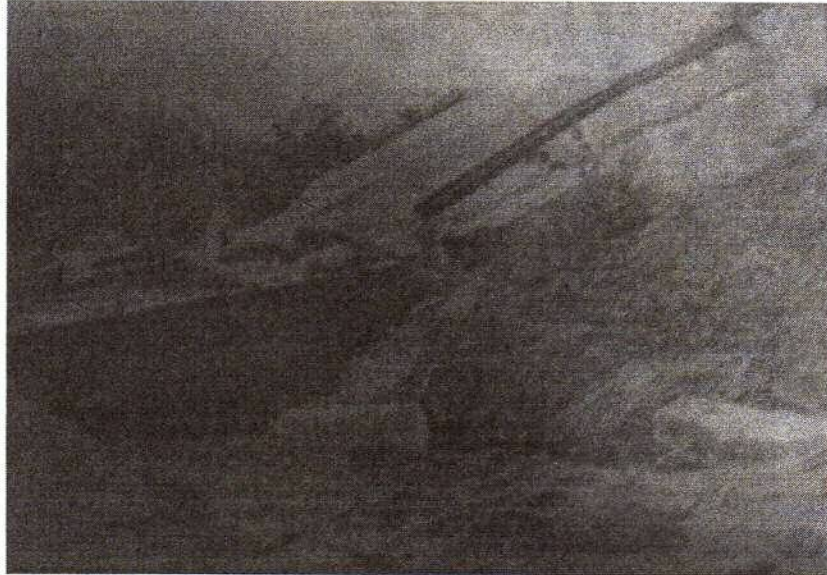


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T



In September of 1983, the Boone Grove Bridge (viaduct) came down.





Below is a picture taken in 2003,
this is where the bridge once stood.



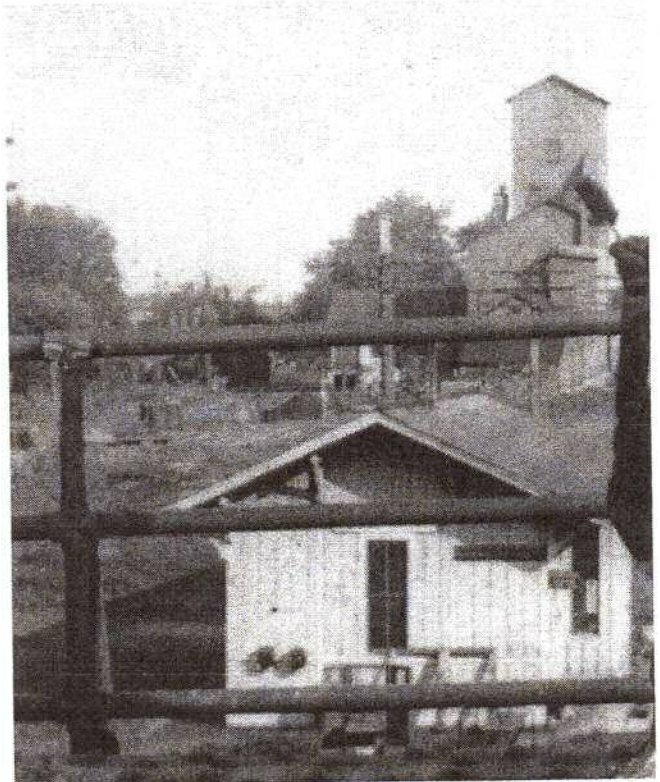
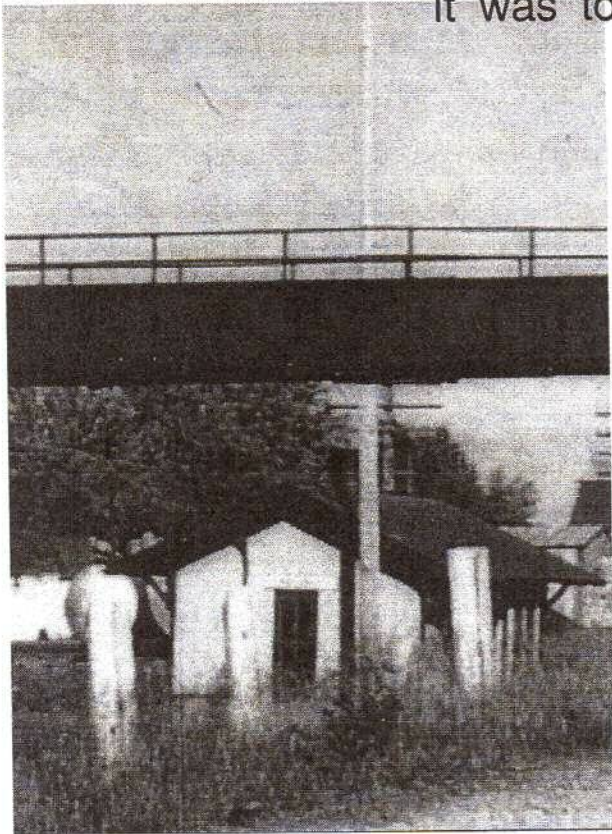
BOONE GROVE

9

This is the original sign off the Boone Grove Depot.



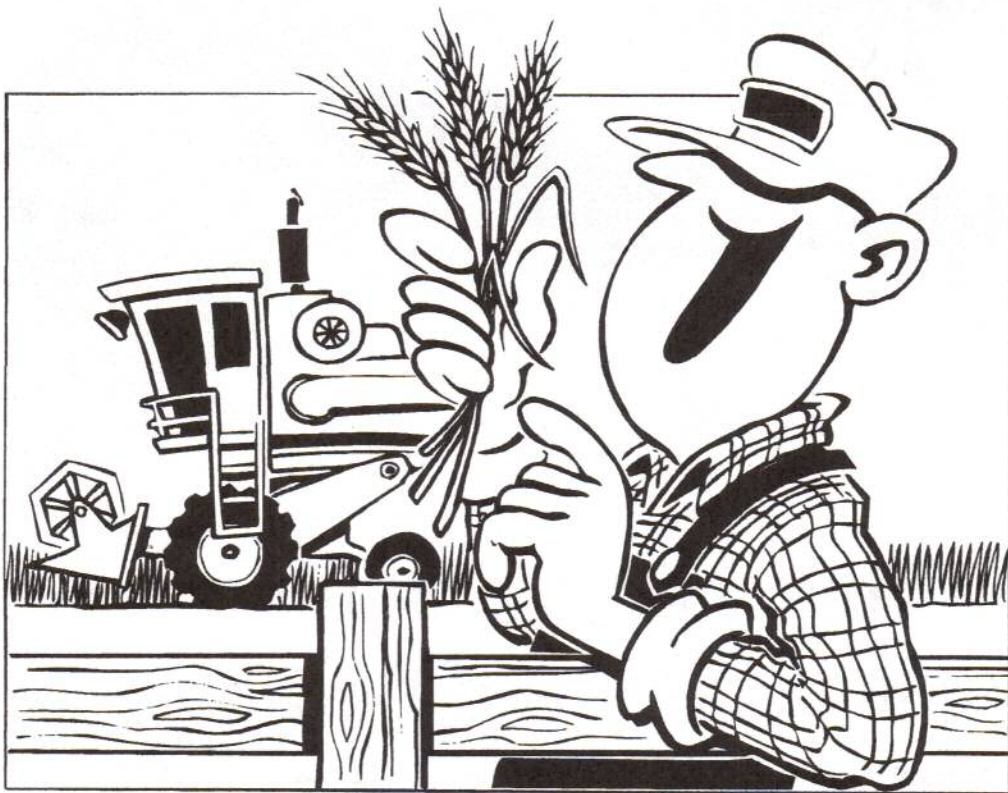
These plaques came off the bridge before it was torn down.



The Boone Grove Depot was built right after the railroad was put in. The depot was closed down in the mid 50s and torn down around 1970. The sign and plaques are property of Harry Dale and Ruby Casbon.



CHESTERS
HEINOLD ELEVATOR
OLSON'S BLACKSMITH



Algot Olson came to Boone Grove in 1924 and went into business with his uncle, Alfred Olson. Algot bought out his uncle in 1928 and took over the business himself.



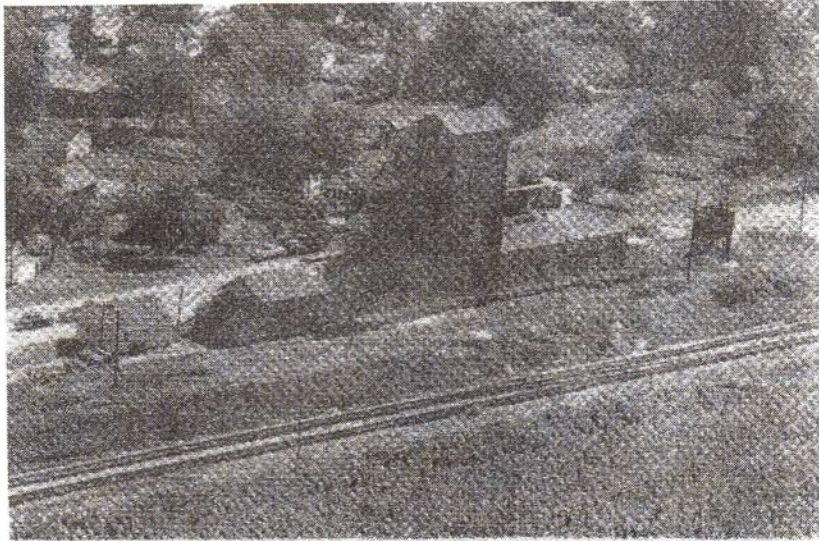
This picture is the first blacksmith shop which sat east of today's post office.

In 1937, Olson moved into a new blacksmith shop. The building was built by Olson himself and the shop included a hardware store. Algot took care of the blacksmithing and Goldie took care of hardware store.



The shop and store were closed around 1970 and the Olsons moved to Florida. Today the building still stands and is used as a private home and local post office.

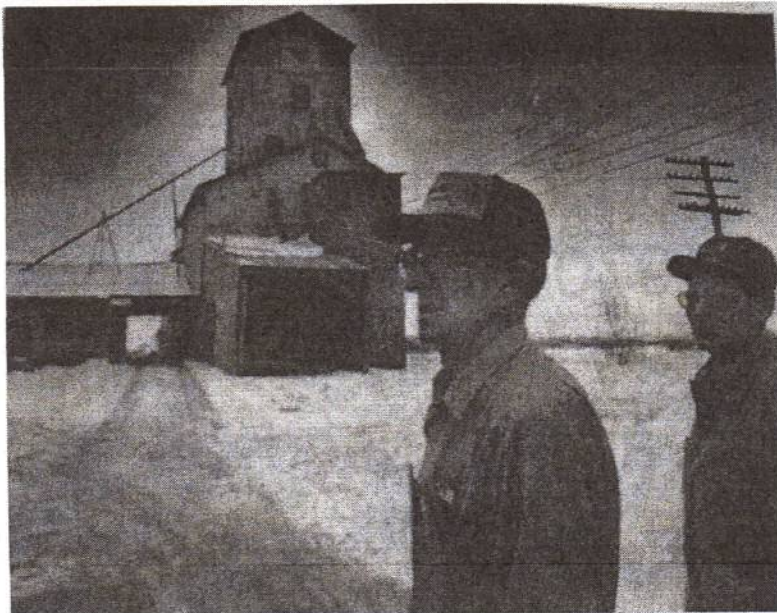
Around 1917 the Goodrich Hay and Grain Company built a grain elevator in Boone Grove. In 1956 the Boone Grove Grain Elevator was purchased by Heinold Elevator.



BOONE GROVE ELEVATOR
B. J. Krost

BOONE GROVE

On March 10, 1978 the elevator was closed down

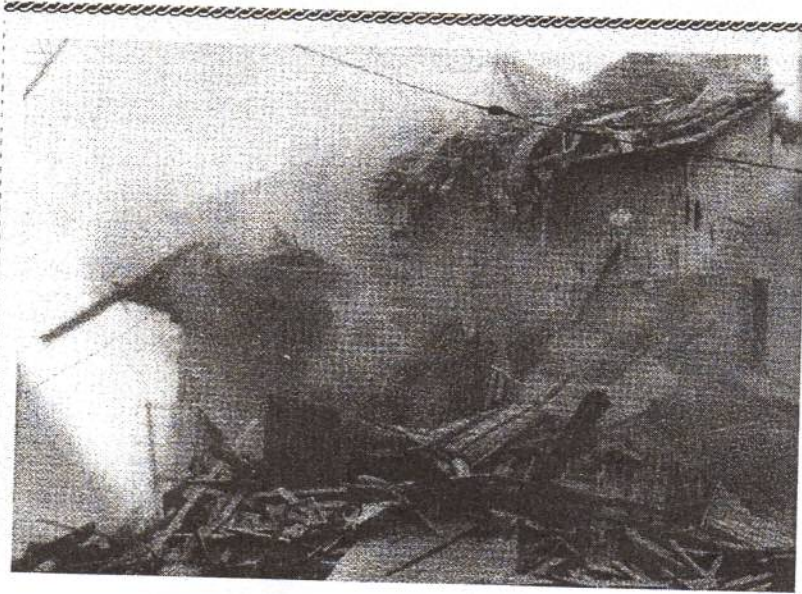


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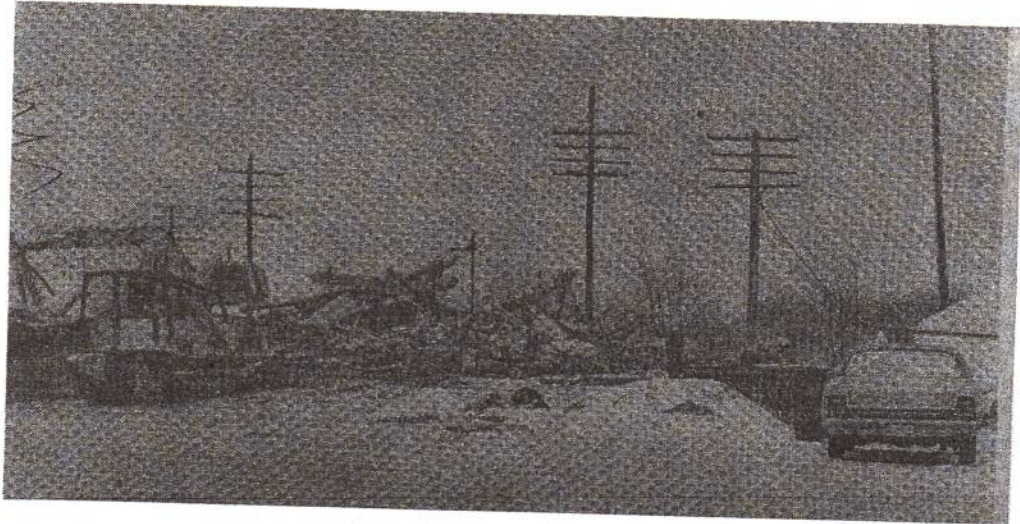


Pictures of the Boone Grove Elevator.





On December 13, 1978 the grain elevator was torn down.



In the late 30s or early 40s George Chester and his son, John, started a business called George Chester & Son Seed Co. They bought a building in Boone Grove and converted it into a seed corn plant.

In 1951 Charles Bowman and Orville Redenbacher bought the business of George Chester and renamed the plant Chester Hybrid.

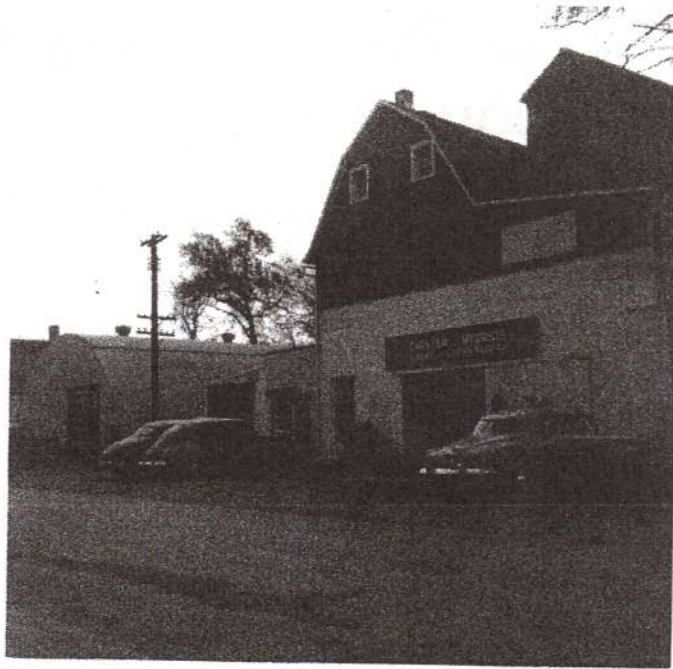


BOONE GROVE
Chester Hybrids

BOONE GROVE

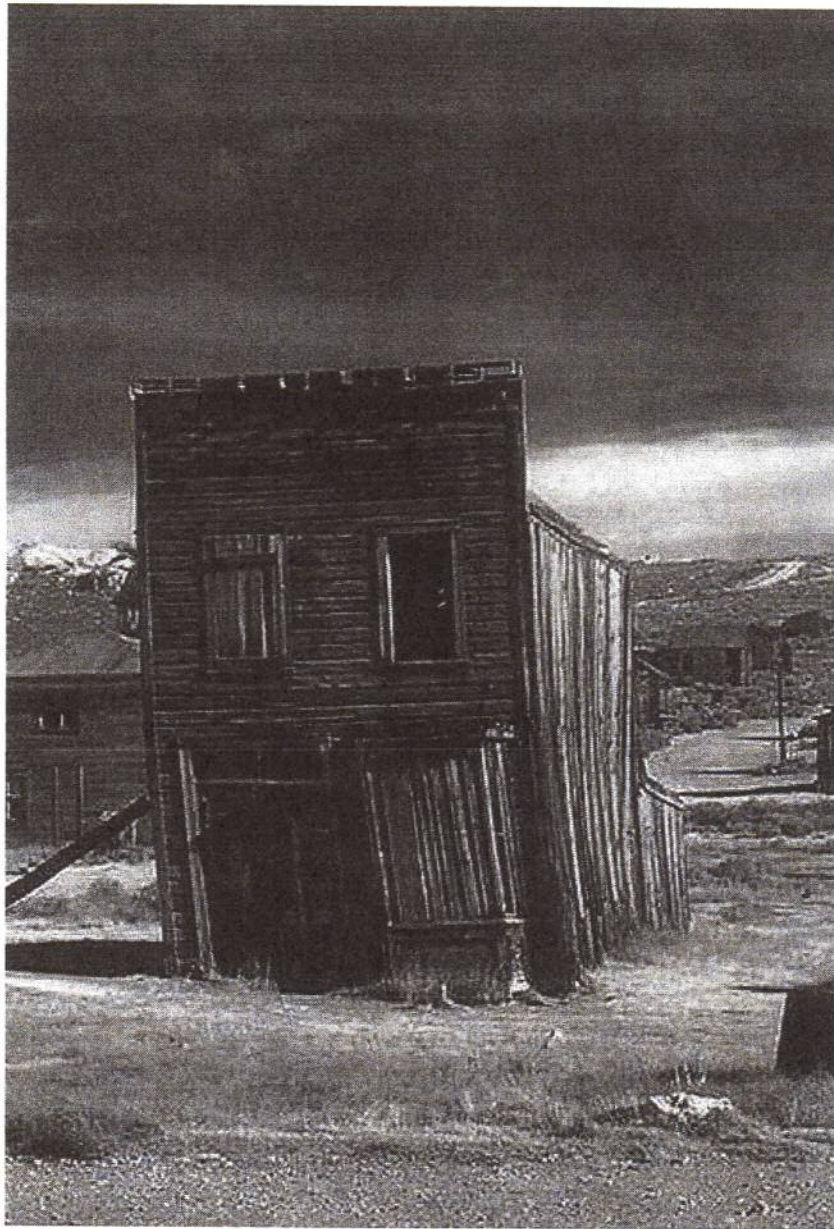
In the early 60s Chester Hybrid started building a liquid fertilizer plant on the east side of the bridge.

In 1979 the Boone Grove Fertilizer plant closes down and is torn down in 1980.



This is all that is left of Chesters seed corn plant.

BOONE GROVE'S



OLD STORES

Around the turn of the century there were 1
three stores established in Boone Grove, the
owners being J. B. Woods, the Dye
Brothers, and Frederick Wittenberg.

The Dye Brothers sold clothes, shoes and
dry goods out of their store. The store was
located on Main Street on the west side of
town. It sat right across from J.B.Woods
store and closed down in the late 1930s.

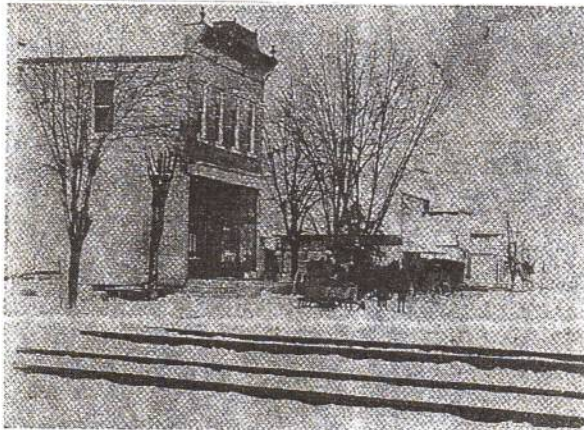


Above is a remodeled version of J.B. Woods
hardware/ post office. The store was opened
in 1883 and was one of the first businesses in
the newly relocated Boone Grove. The store
was located on the Main Street on the west
side of town. J.B. Woods store was also
closed down in the late 1930s.

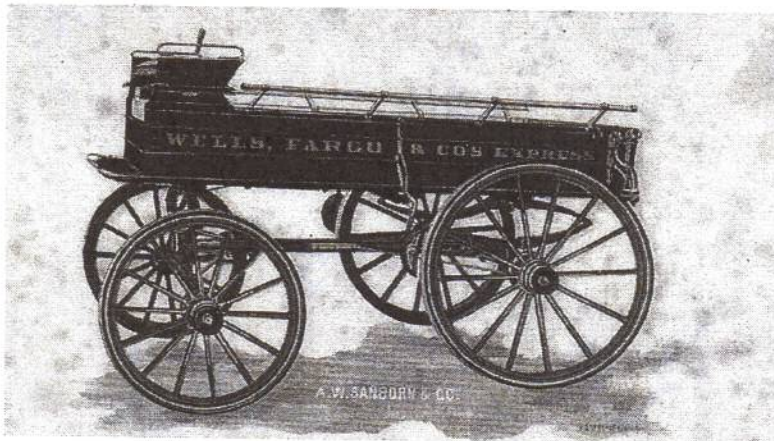


This picture can be found in Bill Roeske's paper about the history of Boone Grove. It is a picture of Frances Wittenberg Weiler. She was standing in front of her parents store when the picture was taken. The American Flag in the background has 46 stars on it.

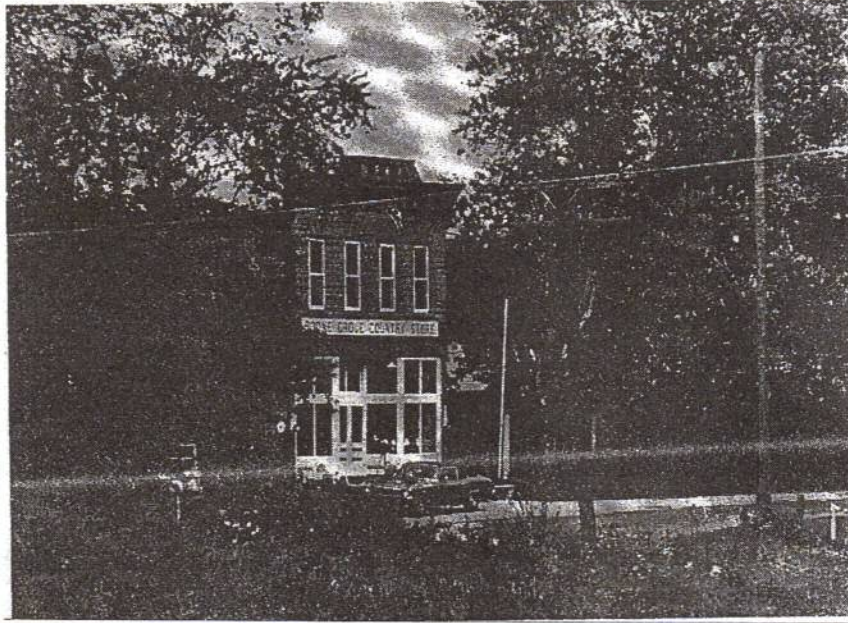
Frederick Wittenberg opened his first store just north of Main Street. His store sold groceries, hardware supplies and served as an occasional post office and Wells Fargo Depot. The first store was opened around 1891. In 1908 the Wittenbergs built a new building just a couple of houses south of the old one. The picture below was taken shortly after the store was built. The store stayed opened until the mid forties when the store owner died.



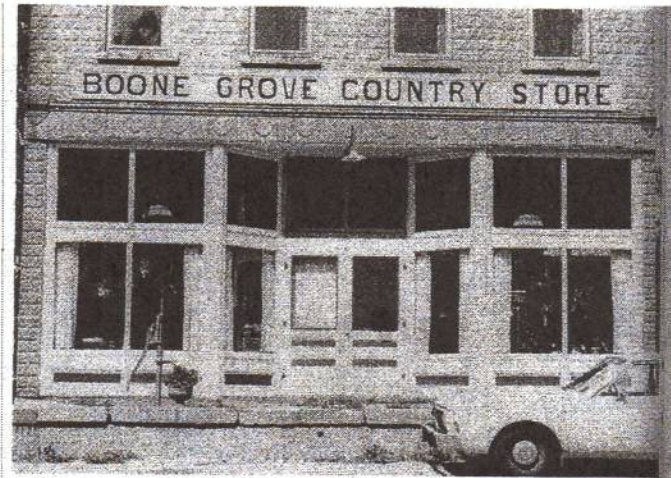
This is a typical Wells Fargo Wagon that was used around the turn of the century to transport cargo.



Mr. and Mrs. William Bare bought the Wittenberg 3 store in 1969 and remodeled it into a country store that sold antiques.



The picture above was taken in 1971.



Somewhere around 1975 the Bares closed down the Boone Grove Country Store.

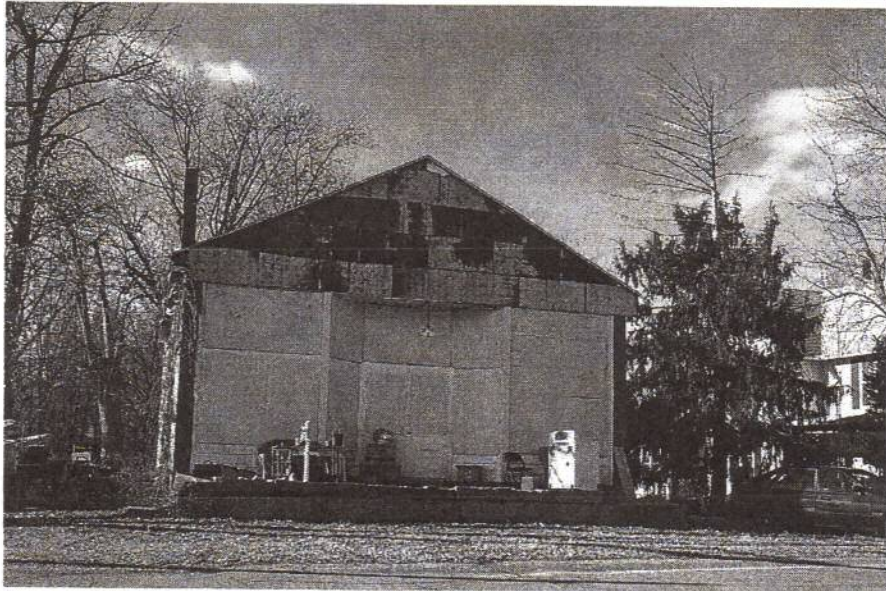


In this picture of the old Wittenberg store you can clearly see the initials M. W. of A. The initials stand for MODERN WOODMEN of AMERICA.

The M. W. of A. is a fraternal beneficiary society. They owned the second floor of the building where they had their meetings. The purpose of the society was centered around health and life insurance. Because it was an insurance society people who worked hazardous jobs could not be members. Some of these jobs were aeronauts, blasters in mines or quarries, chimney sweeps, custodians of nitroglycerin, professional bicycle racers, most railroad jobs, submarine divers or operators, window glass blowers, steeple climbers, ice-barge employees and coal train pilots to name a few.



In November of 1994 the old Wittenberg store caught fire.



This picture was taken in 2003.
This is all that is left of a store
with a very long history.



BOONE GROVE BUSINESSES



1a



This is a picture of Jake Rampke's store when it was known as the Royal Blue Grocery Store.

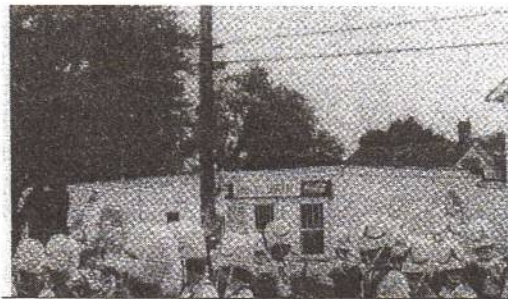
The store pictured below was known as Rampke's Grocery Store. It was first owned by Hubert Thatcher around 1930. Thatcher also had a butcher shop in town located behind his house.



SINCLAIR DINOSAUR

Close to the year 1936 Jake and Wilma Rampke purchased the store and sold groceries. You can see the gasoline pumps in front of the store where they sold Sinclair gasoline.

In 1957 the store was purchased by Lawrence Ludington. Lawrence continued to sell groceries, but he also added on a lunch room. The kids from the school were allowed to walk across the street and have hamburgers, French fries, and shakes for lunch.



In 1965 Lawrence Ludington sold the store to the Sherman family, who sold it to Reda Phillips. Reda continued to run the grocery store and grill until the store closed in the late 70s.

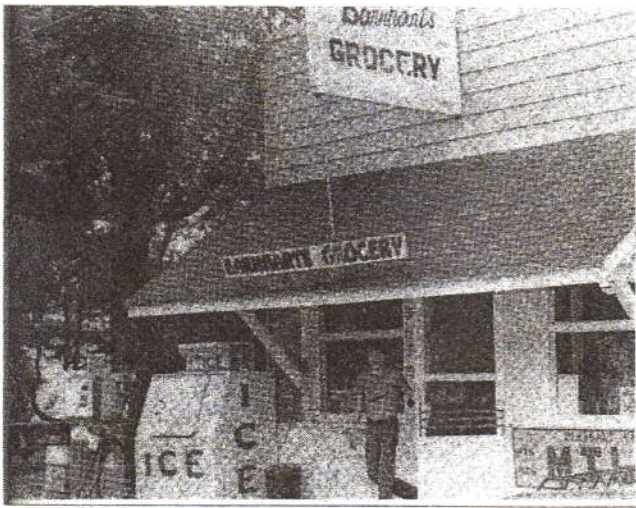
In 1924, Bill and Marietta Resh built a small grocery store in Boone Grove on Main Street. The Resh's moved to Boone Grove from Kouts in 1919. The Resh's operated another grocery store up the street for about 4 years before building this one.



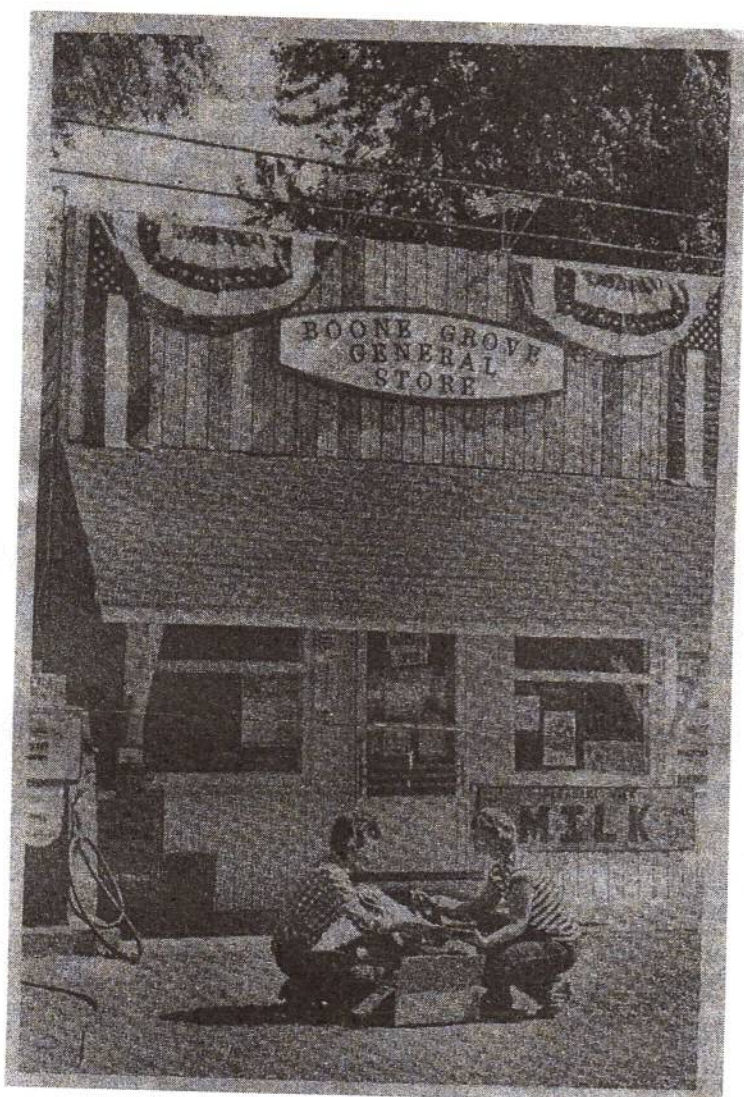
Sometime in the late 60s Marietta Resh, now Marietta Quinn, closed down the little grocery store.

During the early 70s the little grocery store was owned by the Sherman family. In the late 70s the store was reopened as a grocery store by the Barnharts.

4



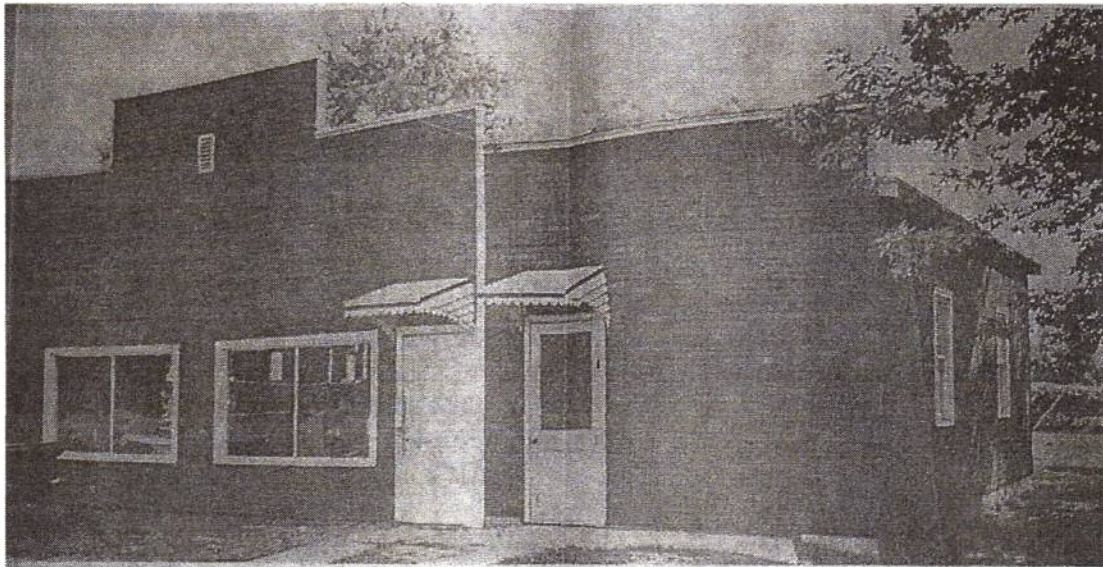
In 1982 the Barnharts sold the store to Fred Untch. Fred continued to run the store, renaming it the Boone Grove General Store.



Fred Untch closed his store down in the mid 90s, not long after the new high school opened.

Resh's old store sits empty today after having many different owners.





Although a lot of the stores in Boone Grove changed ownership, their principle business stayed the same. Once a grocery store, always a grocery store.

That is not true about this building. I am not quite sure who built this building, but at one time it was a restaurant owned by Carl Clemans. Around the year 1949 or 1950 Harvey Shurr used the building for a car dealership. Harvey sold Kaisers and Frazers; these cars were on the market through the 50s. After Harvey closed the car dealership, Boone Grove School used the building to house the shop and band rooms for the high school. When the school built on its 1969 addition, the building was no longer needed and was torn down.



In the picture on the left, taken in 1942, the white building was the restaurant/ car dealership/ shop and band room.

The small building on the right was once a barbershop that was located on the west side of town next to J.B. Woods store. It was moved here when George Chester built his seed corn plant. The building was used by Carl Clemans as his residence while he ran his restaurant next door. In 1949 this building was moved again. This time it was moved a couple of blocks west and turned into a post office.



The empty parking lot across from the school is where both of these old buildings once stood.

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This last section is going to be used for bits and pieces of information that I have gathered in my research. The information on this page might be here because I didn't have enough facts to write a lot about a particular subject or maybe it was something that only one person mentioned to me in a conversation. Chances are that I haven't any pictures or written proof. All I have is a story that was told to me by one or two people.

The first subject I am going to talk about is the KKK or Ku Klux Klan. In my research I have talked to three or four people that stated that the KKK was active in Boone Grove. They would have their meetings on the top floor of Wittenberg's store. I also learned that the Modern Woodmen of America was supposed to be a front for the KKK. With some deductive reasoning I am guessing that they were active in the first half of the 1900s.

I also ran across information that there were many types of other businesses in town that I did not mention.

Harry Vergin and Bill Rampke had barber shops in town.

Harry had his own building and Bill gave haircuts on his front porch. There was mention of a creamery in town and a tavern. There was also a couple of mechanics and repair shops. Finally, the Calumet Bus Service used the old Chester's plant as a bus barn. I have probably missed something, but there is always next time.

REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

History of Porter County
Boone Grove High School yearbooks
1925 Vox Scholae
1926 Vox Scholae
Standard Atlas of Porter County

I would like to thank those who took the time to talk to me and those who loaned me pictures, newspaper articles, and books. I apologize in advance if I forgot anyone.

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