

Remembering
Prophetstown's
Plow Factory

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by

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Introduction

Through the years Prophetstown has had quite a large number of businesses. When Bud Thompson was our mayor I told him it would be interesting to know what businesses have been in our community. He suggested that I find out. So back in 2005 the search began. My guess was that we probably had about 500 businesses in our town during its history, but that was way off. As of today my research has revealed that there have been over 2,500 businesses in Prophetstown. And there were probably more. We do not have many copies of our early newspapers or phone books and that is where most of the business information was gathered from. Should more of those come into our possession I am sure our list would grow.

One of those businesses was the Plow Factory. That is what this presentation will cover.

The Prophetstown Plow Factory

From Bent-Wilson *History of Whiteside County*, 1877.

A large brick building was erected in the village in 1854 by Horace Annis, Thomas Bryant, and the Warner brothers, as a plow and wagon factory, and for four years quite an extensive business was done. The firm then dissolved, and the manufacture was successfully continued by the Messrs. Warners, who also added a steam saw-mill to the factory, with which they sawed considerable lumber. The whole business was discontinued in 1868.



By 1871 you can see that the business had closed and that the building had deteriorated.
It sat about where the Lutheran Church is today.



Another view of W. 3rd Street and the Plow Factory back then.

Horace Annis, one of the men who founded the plow factory, also owned a hotel in Prophetstown called the Annis House. It was located behind the building at 304 Washington Street, which is now the home of the Prophetstown Area Historical Society.



This is how the Annis House looked not long after it was built.



Later there were two business built to the east of the Annis House.



In this view of Washington Street you can see the east side the Robinson & Parish Store that sat where the Historical Society building is now.



The Robinson & Parish building was demolished and in 1892 George Paddock built a new building and moved his Bank of Prophetstown into it. You can still see the Annis House behind Paddock's new building.



This building at 112 E 3rd St. started life about 1871 as the First National Bank of Prophetstown. Later it became the Bank of Prophetstown, a private bank owned by George Paddock. He moved from here to the new building at 304 Washington.

By 1908 the Annis House had fallen into disrepair and was demolished.



This is the owner at the time, Hamden Sturtevant.

Old Landmark Gone

What was known as the Annis House was taken down in January, 1908. Nathan Thompson, who came in 1844, says the building was there at that time and was erected about 1841 or 42. It was last occupied by H. A. Sturtevant as a residence. As a hotel it goes back to the early days of the stage coach and saw much of primitive travel and excitement. Walnut was cheaper than pine, as it was a native wood, and the writer secured a piece of a door jamb for the Historical Society, which is as hard and bright as ever after sixty years of usefulness - peace to its ashes.

What is now Star Road and our 3rd Street was the old Rock Island and Dixon State Road, making 3rd Street the "main" street in Prophetstown and that is where most of our early businesses were located. That is why Horace built his hotel on 3rd Street. After the railroad came in 1871 Washington Street became our "main" street.

After the Annis House was demolished the land sat vacant for years until George Brydia built the Coke Cottage there in 1948.

July 28, '48
**New Lunch Room Will Open
Thursday in Brydia Building**

Page 4 of this Echo contains the announcement of the opening Thursday evening, July 29, of the Coke Cottage to be operated by Wesley Middleton of Morrison in the new building erected by George S. Brydia on Third Street at the rear of the Farmers National Bank building. Fixtures and decorations are complete and Mr. Middleton expects to have everything in readiness by tomorrow evening, when 1,500 ice cream cups will be given away free to visitors to the new enterprise.

The Coke Cottage occupies a space 21x23 in the west end of the new Brydia building. Attractively done with knotty pine walls, paneled ceiling and a red concrete floor, it has a 17 foot fountain and lunch bar across the south wall opposite the entrance, and has booths along the east and west walls. Mr. Middleton, who has had 12 years of experience in the lunchroom business, will carry a line of Goodenough ice cream, both bulk and package, and offer a complete soda fountain service, and serve sandwiches, salads, etc. He will devote his entire time to the business and will be open every day and every evening in the week.

Later, that Coke Cottage became what we knew at Chuck's Place.

