

2-room school being revived

■ Building in New Albany, one of oldest black schools in the state, will house a museum and a classroom.

Associated Press

NEW ALBANY, Ind. — Deceyed and missing poplar siding has been replaced on a wall of the Division Street School in New Albany, and the cracks and missing bricks in the 116-year-old building's foundation are no longer.

But those repairs are only the first steps in refurbishing the second-oldest remaining black school in Indiana, architect Ron Stiller said.

He is working for the Friends of the Division Street School, a non-profit group created to save the historic two-room school.

This spring and summer the roof is to be replaced; repairs to the old building's exterior are to be completed; and the worn-out interior will be refurbished.

One of the two rooms on the building's main floor will be turned into a 19th-century classroom again and the other will be a museum of New Albany's black heritage, said Scott Wood, a historic-preservation specialist in New Albany's planning department.

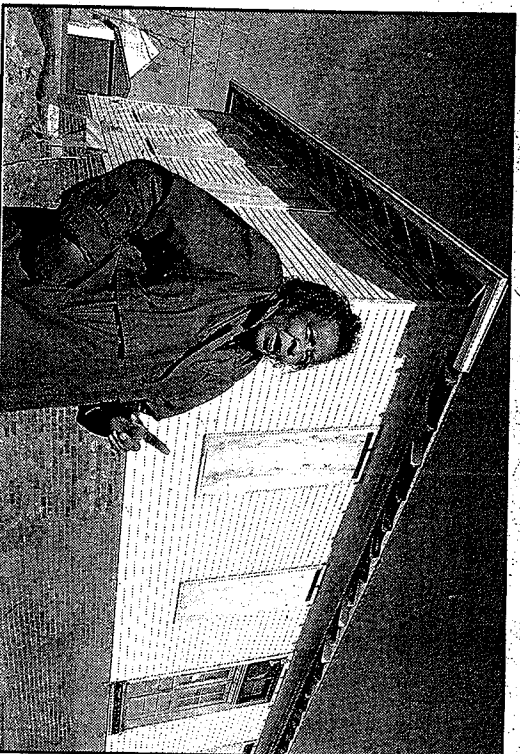
The basement, which was used primarily for storage, also is to be refurbished so that it can be used as a community meeting center for the neighborhood.

The city planning department will manage the school's funding, which comes from government and private grants and individual contributions, Wood said.

He expects bids to be solicited for the major construction work in April and estimates that the refurbishing will cost about \$250,000. Kathryn Hickerson, who is 69 and attended Grades 1-6 at the Division Street School from 1938 to 1944, said she is thrilled to see work starting on the old building.

She used to closely follow the condition of her old school when she worked for the New Albany-Floyd County School Corp., said Hickerson, who is retired.

Hickerson knew the old school was used for years as a storage



Former student: Kathryn Hickerson, 69, attended Grades 1-6 at the Division Street School in New Albany, which is being refurbished.

Michael Clevenger / Associated Press

building and shop for the system's maintenance department.

When she learned around 1998 that the system was building a new maintenance facility, Hickerson realized her old school's days were numbered.

She told social studies teacher Victor Megenity that she was afraid the deteriorating building would be torn down. And before long, they had started working to form the Friends of the Division Street School.

Since then, their organization and the school corporation have gotten government and private grants and individual commitments of money that total about \$280,000.

The fund-raising goal for the building's restoration is about \$300,000, said Sally Newkirk, director of the Carnegie Center for Art and History in New Albany and a member of the board of directors of the Friends group.

The group must raise more money to complete the refurbishing, Hickerson said, and the organization would like to raise enough money for an endowment to help maintain the building in



Pat McDonough / Associated Press

Crowded class: This photograph was taken May 6, 1941, and shows students from Grades 1-3 at the Division Street School. Three grades were taught in each of the school's two rooms.

Discipline in the classroom was strict — and had to be, so the teacher could instruct children at so many different levels.

"You did not get up and move around the room," Hickerson said. There simply wasn't enough space, and teachers simply didn't have the time to deal with anything but teaching. "You knew everybody, and teachers knew your parents on a personal basis," she said.

Students wouldn't dare misbehave. In hindsight, Hickerson said, it's clear the classes were terribly crowded and school resources skimpy. But she didn't have the experience of better conditions to compare with the Division Street School when she was a student, so her years there were happy.

She hopes that, in about two more years, students from throughout the state will start visiting the Division Street School again to learn what education was like in a two-room school for blacks.

Hickerson's not sure how much more money will be needed. But after seeing work on the building get started, "We are sure it's going to get done," she said.

■ Story by Ben Z. Hershberg of The Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal.

Education

■ Cuts to colleges operating, repair funds already sought from BI

touch on education.

Universities are targeted to lose \$29 million in operating funds in 2002-03 — about 2.7 percent of their operating budgets. The governor also would cut university building repair funds by \$92 mil-

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