

There is no greater place to live in America than in a small town. But the ravages of time and the fickleness of humanity have worked changes in small towns which have left many of them struggling for survival. In fact, some towns are in the intensive unit, just waiting for the final deathblow. Others are already dead, having died from multiple causes. An uncaring citizenry has brought about the demise of many a small town. A small town is not the result of evolution, but the ingenuity and sweat of caring men and women who have gone before us. When the citizens of a small town no longer appreciate their heritage, and doesn't care about their town's future, then deterioration will soon be inscribed upon everything in town, from the town's economy to its morals. All it takes to kill a town is apathy, whether it is Red Boiling Springs, Lafayette, Westmoreland, or Tompkinsville, KY. When people care, good things happen. Those who care make a difference.

An incompetent leadership has also contributed to the demise of many small towns. I've never understood why so many of us have had a hand in placing unscrupulous, and unlearned men and women, possessed of little talent, in places responsibility. Furthermore, what is even more difficult to comprehend is why we continue to give the position back to them, even though their tenure of office has not produced any evidence that their community is better off as a result. In some small towns, a house cleaning would be in order.

Brain-gain has hurt many small towns. Some of our most intelligent young people go off to college, but following graduation; they choose not to return to their small towns. Consequently, we lose the benefit of the highly intelligent young. What is even more revolting is that the city and county "fathers" don't want them back for fear that they will be competition for them or their grandchildren. The smart young aren't going to stay in a place where this type of mentality exists. They leave, and it is difficult to blame them. When a town is being run by a group of Homo sapiens who are only a notch or two above a sophisticated chimpanzee, then it won't be long until a death notice will appear and we will see it.

Then there are those heartless politicians who, by means of their legislation, have practiced enthusiasm on countless small towns-sending jobs to Mexico and China. There was once over a thousand garment jobs in the Red Boiling Springs area-jobs that paid decent wages, but they are gone and those who lost them are still struggling for survival. When small towns lose jobs, they die economically.

Towns die when the citizens don't care, when the leaders are incompetent, when the best young minds go elsewhere to work and to live, and when heartless politicians (Democrats and Republicans alike) pay other companies in America to go to Mexico and China, and then reward illegal immigrants with jobs and fringe benefits while the people in small towns pay \$3.00 a gallon for gas so they can drive to work fifty or seventy miles away.

## The Demise of A Small Town

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We know the causes for the demise of small towns. But what are we going to do about it?  
People, we can't change things for the good by keeping quiet.