

Overview of Historic Preservation/History in Murray

The original Murray Arts Council was the initial instigator of historic preservation when their chair, Arlette Day, encouraged the city to create a museum. She and her husband operated the local Day Murray Music from a historic building and Arlette wanted to highlight the history of Murray. Arlette organized a community drive sometime in the late 1970s to collect museum artifacts. The city provided some space for museum displays in hall way cases in the newly designed city hall in 1982 but much of the newly collected artifacts were put in storage.

Shortly after the Murray Arts Advisory Board was created, activities were planned in the historic downtown Murray area. Under the direction of the first Arts Board chair, Bill Wright, and owner of many historic buildings in downtown Murray, the first art awards were presented at luncheons held at the Murray Chapel in 1989 and Desert Star Playhouse in 1990 as part of a new annual Vintage Days program that celebrated both arts and history elements of the city. The arts board began to explore and research the architectural assets and unique ethnic history of Murray.

By 1992, the arts board and new city staff began researching historic buildings. In 1995, a historic steering committee was organized with long-time residents. In 1996, the Historic Preservation Advisory Board was created by city ordinance as a new state CLG program that provided state funding and professional training and resources for historic preservation. An additional ordinance was created in 1997, establishing a formal local historic registry. Vintage Days and driving tours were organized to highlight Murray's historic buildings. A number of local publications were developed by the various committees during this time period to document the history of Murray and its historic building assets including *Murray Historic Inventory*, *Murray History Showcase* and *Between the Cottonwoods*. A *Between the Cottonwoods* Children's History Workbook was written and published for school curriculum use for 3rd grades studying community history. Cemetery tours were created for school children to hear stories about Murray residents who were buried there.

In 2001, the forgotten museum artifacts were discovered in a large storage unit the city had been renting for nearly 20 years. At the same time, the VECC Center in Murray City Hall was vacated. The history board met weekly for several months, wearing masks as they removed items from the storage unit, documenting and taking photos of each item. The city gave permission to move the items from the storage unit to the vacant VECC room and eventually as a museum location. A new Murray Museum became a priority of the history board and the centennial committee. When the smelter smokestacks were demolished, EPA mitigation monies provided funding to document the smelter including museum construction in City Hall and a 30 minute video, *Giants on the Skyline*. The new Murray Museum opened in 2002 as part of the centennial celebration. Two new publications were published as part of the centennial including *Centennial Album* featuring photos that had never been published and *Faces of Murray* featuring 315 family bios with photos of family, home, and businesses. Additional products were created for the centennial celebration including afghans featuring historic buildings.

Using a few volunteers and one part-time seasonal staff, the museum started to organize its collection of scrapbooks, photos, family files, and other documents.

A few years later, the Fire Department celebrated its centennial and a history book of its department was created by part time museum staff. A silent video, *Fire*, filmed in 1924 involving the fire department was reproduced for distribution, adding typical music of the past to the silent melodrama.

In 2006, the city ordinance was revised and the board name was changed to the Murray History Advisory Board which reflected the broadening scope of history oversight and projects in the city including preservation, museum and educational programs. All history related wording was combined into one ordinance to include board roles and the historic registry, which was revised to feature more selective criteria for buildings on the registry.