

HISTORY OF THE “NEELY HOUSE” aka --Murphy Hotel

The Neely house listed on the national register of historic places as the Murphy Hotel February 11, 1993 as an example of a railroad Hotel. The hotel remains intact and substantially unaltered today from its original appearance. The hotel was built of brick in the Modern-Classical style between 1910-1912. The large two story porch on the main facade was built with fluted columns and scroll-like ornament capitals. The hotel is described as a modern hotel in every detail, with hot and cold running water in every room. The interior was designed with twenty-two hotel rooms, nine fireplaces, and three bathrooms on each floor. The hotel catered to salesmen and travelers who arrived in Jackson at the adjacent N.C.&St.L.Depot. Tradition states that Mr. Neely would meet trains at 4:00am to hand out coffee and sandwiches to promote the hotel. Mr. Neely was recognized as one of best hotel caterers in West Tennessee. The hotel was operated by the Neely family for the next thirty years and became one of Jackson's best known hotel building.

In 1946 Mrs. Lillie Neely sold the hotel for \$5,000 to Mr. Robert J. Murphy. Since, it has been identified as the Murphy Hotel for over 50 years. Mr. Murphy was an area farmer and purchased the hotel as a business investment. During the 1950's and 1960's passenger rail travel along the railroad declined and the hotel relied less and less on rail travelers for business. Although Mr. Murphy died in 1960, his two daughters continued to operate the hotel. The adjacent depot was closed to passenger rail traffic in 1967 and bus traffic in 1970's, the hotel remained open to both travelers and permanent residents till 1996.

The city of Jackson, TN. purchased the hotel in 1997 with hopes of preserving the hotel by converting the structure into a children's museum. About the time the children's museum was going to open, the tornado of 2003 took its toll on the hotel. The building was under insured and badly damaged. The Children's museum chose to move to a new building.

In 2005 the building was acquired by Hal Crocker of Crocker Construction Co. Mr. Crocker has worked closely with the Tennessee Historic Commission to restore The Neely House to its original beauty. The Hotel still features its original doors, mantles, light fixtures, bathroom fixtures and similar details. The Neely House (Murphy Hotel) is Jackson's only remaining example of a railroad Hotel.

Information obtained from various sources