

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
ENTRY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

LISTED 8/7/79

NR-LISTED

8-7-79

#366

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Murphy, William J., House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

923 N. 13th Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Fort Smith

VICINITY OF

Third

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Arkansas

05

Sebastian

131

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

XOCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

XBUILDING(S)

XPRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

XCOMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

XPRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

XYES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Yearty

STREET & NUMBER

923 North 13th Street (Mailing address: P.O. Box 892)

CITY, TOWN

Fort Smith

VICINITY OF

STATE

Arkansas 72901

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Circuit Clerk's Office

STREET & NUMBER

Sebastian County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Fort Smith

STATE

Arkansas 72901

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>C. 1885</u>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The William J. Murphy House is a two-and-one-half-storey red brick structure. The plan is rectangular. The roof is a combination of hips and jerkinhead gables. A hipped dormer with double windows is located on the north elevation. On the front (east) elevation are two dormers and a pedimented jerkinhead gable. The gable contains a single double-paned window. The window is slightly recessed, and the walls are rounded where they join the window. Centered on the front elevation is a hipped dormer which contains a recessed porch. The porch opening is divided into three sections. The middle section is wider and longer than the sides. The side sections are supported by Ionic columns. A garland frieze is located above the columns. A smaller hipped dormer is located on the north end of the front elevation. Across the front elevation is a single-storey porch. The porch is supported by Ionic columns. The porch roof is balustraded, and its frieze is decorated with garlands. Double doors open from the second storey onto the porch roof balcony. On the north elevation is a porch which is detailed like the front porch. On the rear is a two-storey frame enclosed porch. The north elevation has a two-storey chamfered bay. The main entrance is a glazed single-panel door which is inset between Ionic columns. The columns support a stone impost which supports a dressed stone lintel. The entrance to the porch balcony is inset under a rusticated stone lintel which is supported by carved stone scroll-brackets. Windows are one over one (1/1) double hung, and they have stone lintels and sills. Windows are asymmetrically placed. The front and side steps, water table, and porch wall coping are dressed stone. The foundation is rusticated stone.

Interior

The house has eleven foot (11') ceilings, and the exterior walls are twelve inches (12") thick. There are three fireplaces downstairs. Each is detailed in a different order: Ionic, Corinthian, and Doric. The second floor fireplaces are classically styled, but they are less ornate. All of the fireplaces are coal burning, and they have cast-iron covers.

Alterations

The house has been converted into four apartments, but there is no structural damage. The top of the north bay has a skylight.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
J-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
X 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
X 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES

ca. 1895

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

T.T. Reddick (Unconfirmed)

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The William J. Murphy House is a large Neo-Colonial Revival dwelling that was built in Fort Smith, Arkansas, in the 1890's. It was built for William J. Murphy, a prominent Fort Smith businessman. The building gains historical significance through its association with Murphy. The house is also architecturally significant. The stone trim around openings and the classical detailing of the porches are of particular importance.

William J. Murphy moved from St. Louis to Fort Smith, Arkansas, in 1885. In Fort Smith Murphy became a successful businessman. He founded the W.J. Murphy Saddlery and Harness Company which for decades was one of the largest such companies in the Southwest. Murphy managed the company until his death in 1935, after which date the company closed. Murphy was also a director of Merchants National Bank in Fort Smith for 35 years.

Murphy ordered the construction of the W.J. Murphy House in the 1890's as a gift for his wife, Mollie. The design for the house is attributed to local architect T.T. Reddick, but Reddick's connection with the house is not confirmed. An important design consideration was that the house be planned so that it could accomodate large social events. When completed, the building was one of the premier social centers in Fort Smith. During one two-week period, nine dances took place in the house. Among the well-known guests who were entertained in the house were Judge Isaac Parker (Fort Smith's "hanging judge") and international opera stars Ernestine Schuman-Heink and Galli Curci. Several governors and congressman were also guests of Murphy.

The large two-and-one-half-storey house is rectangular in shape. The roof is a multiple combination of hips and jerkinhead gables. Each elevation is asymmetrical. Two one-storey porches project from the house. One spans the entire length of the east elevation (facade). A balcony occupies the roof of this porch. The other porch is a small portico that is positioned on the north elevation. The portico is also topped by a balcony. A two-storey bay is also located near the rear of the north elevation. Two dormers rise from the roof on the east elevation. One is large and is centrally positioned; the other is small and is set near the northern side of the roof. Five corbelled chimneys are ranged on the roof in an irregular fashion.

A variety of facing materials were used in the construction of the Murphy House. The walls are red brick. The foundation is rusticated stone, and the lintels and sills for windows are smooth dressed stone. A weatherboarded, two-storey shed-roof addition is attached to the rear (west) of the house.

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CONTINUATION SHEET.

ITEM NUMBER 8

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All openings are rectangular. Windows are one-over-one (1/1) double-hung. The front entrance is centered on the east elevation. It is comprised of a single door and transom. The entrance is recessed in the brick wall. It is flanked by free-standing unfluted columns which possess Ionic capitals. The columns support stone inposts which, in turn, support a stone lintel.

Double doors open to the east elevation balcony. These doors also occupy a recess in the brick wall. The stone lintel for the balcony doors is sustained by stone scroll brackets.

The detailing for the Murphy House is classical and elaborate. Both porches are similarly detailed. Each is sustained by unfluted columns with Ionic capitals. Carved festooning decorates the frieze of each porch. The balconies which are located above the porches are balustraded. The large central dormer on the east elevation also features unfluted columns with Ionic capitals and festooning in the frieze. The columns for the dormer are diminutive in scale.

The treatment for the gable-end on the east elevation is unusual. The gable-end is shingled. Centering it is a window that is recessed back from the plane of the wall. The shingled wall curves to form this recess.

The interior of the house features eleven foot (11') ceilings and classical detailing. The most distinctive interior elements are the six classically modeled fireplaces. Three are located on the first floor, and three are on the second floor. Each of the first floor fireplaces is detailed in a different classical order: Ionic, Corinthian, and Doric. The second floor fireplaces are less elaborate. All of the fireplaces are coal burning and have cast-iron covers.

Few alterations have been made to the interior. The house is divided into four apartments. The building was not structurally damaged when it was converted into apartments. The top of the bay on the north elevation has been replaced with a skylight.

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Abstract . Mosley Abstract Company, Fort Smith.

Hempstead, Fay. Centennial History of Arkansas, Vol. II. S.J. Clarke
Publishing Company, 1922.

Southwest American (Fort Smith), May 12, 1965.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one acre
UTM REFERENCES

Quadrangel Name Fort Smith, Ark.-Okla.
Quadrangle Scale 1/24,000

A 115 371171410 391169210
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Description #7 Frezil Miller, Significance #8 Mike Shinn

ORGANIZATION

Fort Smith Heritage Foundation (Research by

Gordon Yearty & Julia Vadon), AHPP

STREET & NUMBER

514 North 6th Street / Suite 500, Continental Building

CITY OR TOWN

Fort Smith / Little Rock

DATE

April 3, 1979

TELEPHONE

501-783-3000

STATE

Arkansas 72901

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

Joan Williams Baldridge, State Historic Preservation

DATE

5/30/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

Officer

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

