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Wendy Bradley Richter

Arkansas State Archives, wendy.richter@arkansas.gov

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Local funeral home established in 1905

By Wendy Richter
For the Siftings

The Murry Funeral Home was established by C. B. Murry and his wife, Fairy Lee, in 1905. It began as just one portion of a multi-faceted business which also sold hardware and furniture, in addition to its undertaking services. Located on Main Street, the original operation was called McDaniel, Murry & Lee. Its slogan was, "We serve you from the cradle to the grave."

The site of the Murrys' new funeral home was in the 700 block of West Main, at the former home of James Garrison Clark. The Murrys lived on the second floor of the house and had four children while residing there. Three sons followed in their footsteps, becoming funeral directors and embalmers. In 1941, they decided to build a new fa-

cility, and construction was completed in 1942, in the 500 block between Clay and Crittenden.

C. B. Murry had envisioned having two separate structures, and his plans came to fruition. One building—a two-story colonial—housed administrative offices and staterooms, with residential rooms upstairs. The second building served as a chapel which they named a "funeral church" where funeral services were held. It included a pipe organ, church pews, and stained-glass windows.

When E. H. Murry (son of C.B.) retired in the 1960s, he sold his interest in Murry Funeral Home to William K. "Billy" Ruggles, who with his wife, Ramona, had worked at the business for several years. The name was changed to Murry-Ruggles Funeral Home. Later, Michael Wilcox joined the

firm, along with the Ruggles' son, Murry. They renovated the structures, with the "funeral church" and "funeral home" being combined into one building.

Unfortunately, the facility was destroyed in the March 1, 1997, tornado that demolished much of downtown Arkadelphia. It was replaced by the current structure that sits at the same location. Today, the business established more than a century ago continues to serve the Clark County area as Ruggles-Wilcox Funeral Home.

For additional information about Clark County history, visit or contact the Clark County Historical Museum (www.clark-countyhistory.org or 230-1360) or the Clark County Historical Association's Archives at the Ouachita Baptist University Library (www.obu.edu/archives or 245-5332).



IMAGES COURTESY CLARK COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION/FOR THE SIFTINGS
Above, Murry Funeral Home is shown when it was in the former J.G. Clark home, and below, one of the funeral home's hearses, belonging to McDaniel, Murry & Lee.

