



NOMINEE

SOUTH MAIN PRESERVATION SOCIETY

South Main Preservation Society has been an integral part of St. Charles for 35 years. The founding fathers of the organization had a desire to support, preserve, and restore South Main Street. In the 1970's a small group of people met in a Victorian house in the 700 block of South Main. The group was a diverse group, but everyone there shared a reflective vision of the future. They all wanted to attract new business, more tourism, new property owners, and the group shared an interest in the history and preservation of the beautiful architecture within the 10 block area known as the "Historic District".



The members of the group continued to grow and the interest in historic preservation was a popular theme. It was decided that in order to be recognized by others, including the City, the group needed to be a formal, organized group with a mission statement and bylaws. South Main Preservation Society was born. Several of the members who founded the group continue as members. There have been many new members throughout the history of the group. Other members of the original group are deceased, but the quest to keep historic preservation the number one goal of the group lives on.

South Main Preservation Society started an historic festival featuring 19th century crafts on the brick street. The flavor of the festival was preservation. Everyone was dressed in period costumes, using period tools, and the experienced craftsmen and women were interested in sharing their knowledge of history pertaining to the crafts. There was a blacksmith, a wood turner using a treadle lathe, basketmaker working with split oak, a person demonstrating chair caneing, a rug braider, a loom weaver, a

salt glazed potter, and more. The group of demonstrators was interacting with the interested visitors sharing the historic aspects of their particular craft. This popular historic craft festival was the forerunner of the successful Festival of the Little Hills, which takes place in August. The festival is an annual celebration of the anniversary of the statehood of Missouri.

South Main Preservation Society members have watched over and preserved historic landmarks within our area. Many of the members reside on Main Street in restored 19th century buildings. One of the founding members led a group of interested residents and business owners in the moving of the KATY Depot so that it wouldn't be torn down with the progress of a new street near the river being built. The depot is a handsome landmark in a simple, but beautiful riverside park.

South Main Preservation Society has used money for research in order to put plaques on buildings, educating the public of the historic value of various buildings. Advice has been given to interested parties concerning questions of historically correct architectural work and appropriate materials to be used in restoration.

The organization has always seen preservation from two important perspectives. SMPS wants to protect the architectural treasure we have inherited, and wants to promote the sound commercial use and assure the economic viability of the district. SMPS wants to preserve the integrity of the buildings, while also promoting a viable business foundation to support the preservation effort. We have a hugely successful "Christmas Traditions" program promoting "living history" characters and Santas from around the world. This program attracts many families and visitors to South Main Street from Thanksgiving to Christmas annually.

SMPS helped to write guidelines and preservation protection for the Historic District. This is an ongoing project. SMPS is active in city government and works diligently to monitor preservation and restoration projects. There have been times when preservation was not the most popular focus group, but the members have never lost sight of the importance of the preservation effort. SMPS is the voice of the people interested in preservation. South Main Preservation Society has proven to be the clearest voice for preservation and recognition of St. Charles for over 35 years.



KATY Depot