

Southern Museum & Galleries

Recently, I discovered a wonderfully unique destination located on East Main St. in downtown McMinnville, TN. The **Southern Museum & Galleries of Photography, Culture & History** captures the essence of McMinnville, its history (including that of one of McMinnville's legendary photographers), and its heyday. The museum was created and opened in November 2001 by Monty

Wanamaker and Chris Keathley. Monty and Chris have crafted an outstanding museum; highlighted by the purchase of the "Steamboat" Cassetty Estate - a broad collection of photographs, photography, equipment, memorabilia, and artifacts which portray legendary Mr. William Spencer "Dad" Lively.

Monty Wanamaker was born and raised in McMinnville and like most young men traveled out of state to follow his dream of the arts. Monty lived and worked in New York City, but returned in the 80's, after working among some of the best artists around. He contributed and worked at one of the first galleries of modern art in NYC, where he utilized his talents of writing and art, along with his excellent people skills. Monty gained tremendous skills and techniques while there and obtained a vast knowledge which is now apparent in the Southern Museum & Galleries of Photography, Culture & History. After purchasing the collection from the Cassetty Estate and meeting Chris Keathley, the two budding artists have created a labor of love; offering visitors, historians and photographers a tremendous walk down the photography and historical timeline.

What makes this museum special are the tremendous collections of photographic equipment, the history of photography, and the tribute to Mr. Lively whose contribution is a national treasure to the Art Photographic scene. If you have followed the progression of photography over the last 100 plus years, you will immediately realize how significant this museum is for photographers worldwide. Students from all over the world would travel to McMinnville, TN in the early twentieth century to learn and study photography at The Southern School of Photography with Mr. William Spencer Lively. Mr. Lively and his two sons started the school in 1904 - one of only two schools of photography in the United States at the time. Mr. Lively was passionate about photography and after lecturing, demonstrating, and presenting his work in exhibitions throughout the

country, he felt his mission was to strive to teach professional photographers to be more than merely takers of pictures, but to attempt to create art with their camera. Mr. Lively gained great recognition and accolades in the photography world and received a request from Eastman Kodak Company to make a number of pictures for a national exhibition in 1909. One of three original images has since been displayed in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. and the Eastman National Museum of Photography in Rochester, NY. Of course, the Southern Museum & Galleries of Photography, Culture & History have two images on permanent display. You can view three, rare original Lumier Auto-Chromes (early color images) from circa 1913, along with some of the original glass plate negatives of Mr. Lively. There is also available for viewing, one of the early slide projectors from circa 1916 in addition to many other antique cameras and equipment. This wonderful collection with the historical timeline shows how technology has rapidly changed and how passion and dedication can change the way in which an art form is viewed, learned and duplicated. The Southern Museum & Galleries of Photography, Culture & History also have a Dottie West Collection (country music star and McMinnville native). A small gift shop features historical books, prints, note cards, original artworks by local artists, and some beautiful Susan DeMay pottery and jewelry. The Museum and Gift Shop are open to the public Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, CST and by appointment. Admission is free. Tel: 931-507-8102 or email ArtGalley@multipro.com.

