

Missouri Community Legacies Field Kit

Introduction

What is Missouri Community Legacies?

Missouri Community Legacies is a documentation initiative of the State Historical Society of Missouri and part of its commemoration of the Missouri Bicentennial. The goal of the program is to create a “snap shot” of Missouri traditions, creative expressions, meaningful places, organizations, and institutions during its bicentennial of statehood and develop a resource – built by the people of Missouri – of long-term use to students and teachers, researchers, and others interested in the rich history, life, and culture of the state.



The program operates on the assumption that the citizens of Missouri know best what represents their particular communities, counties, and regions. Its success rests on the willingness of citizens to document and share the unique characteristics of their communities with others.

What are Missouri Community Legacies?

Missouri community legacies are contemporary, ongoing, and existent local traditions and creative expressions; meaningful places; and organizations and institutions. Local traditions might include festivals, such as Juneteenth in Kansas City or Pershing Days in Laclede. Creative expressions might include quilt art, stories and legends, or food traditions. A meaningful place is a physical site of significance to a community. This might be a park, a building, a cemetery, or maybe even a main street. Organizations and institutions may include religious institutions such as churches, mosques, or synagogues; voluntary associations, such as Rotary Clubs, Lions Clubs, bowling leagues, or other social and volunteer organizations; or professional associations.

Get Started

What is unique or representative about your community, your county, or your region of the state? The question is easier to answer than you think. Consider, for example ...

Does your community have a yearly festival? Is there a local legend shared by community members? Is there a culinary tradition a visitor should not miss out on?

Are there physical places your community treasures? Is there a statue, building, or other structure that is a point of shared memory for your community? Where do community members go for a picnic, a date, or a swim? Where do community members go to remember important moments in the community's history?

What are the organizations and institutions that make your community a vibrant place? What organizations and institutions sustain the community through tough times or make it a great place to live?

Have an idea? *Is it ideal for a Missouri Community Legacies documentation project?* A documentation project may be simple or elaborate but should be narrow in scope. The American Folklife Center recommends “three interrelated limits on your project: a specific group or segment of the population, a specific tradition or subject matter, and a specific place.”

What does it mean to document something? In this context, to document a community legacy means to research, gather materials, and develop resources that illustrate, describe, or demonstrate a unique or representative aspect of your community, your county, or your region. **A complete project includes a three to five page double-spaced written report that explains the history and significance of the subject to a Missouri community, a minimum of five but no more than ten photographs, and administrative paperwork.** Supplemental materials are welcomed. Materials will be accepted in any language.

Make sure to read this entire field kit to become familiar with the process and requirements.

Ask Questions

Now that you have a subject in mind, it is time to start asking some questions. Missouri Community Legacies has three different tracks: local traditions and creative expressions, meaningful places, and organizations and institutions. Each track raises different considerations and questions.

In the case of a local tradition or creative expression, you might ask ...

Why is this activity carried on?

Who participates in the activity? Are there rules that guide who can participate and in what ways? Have these rules changed over time?

Who is responsible for ensuring the activity continues, and how does that person or group learn to perpetuate the activity?

What does the tradition tell you about the community, county, or region where it is carried on?

In the case of a place, you could ask ...

Why is this place meaningful to the community, the county, the region, or the state? Who is it meaningful to?

What is the function of the place? Does it have a designated function?

What does it look like now, and has it always looked the same?

Was the place created by human beings or is it naturally occurring? If it was created, why was it created?

In the case of an organization or institution, you might consider ...

What is the mission and what are the goals of the organization? Have these changed over time?

How does the organization or institution go about fulfilling these goals?

What is the history of the organization or institution? Who is or who are the founders, and why was the organization or institution created?

If an organization, who can be a member? How does one become a member? Has this changed over time?

What does a “year-in-the-life” of the organization consist of or look like?

Research, Observe, and Document

Now that you have some questions in mind, it is time to conduct research, observe, and document your subject. It is recommended that you visit local libraries and archives to learn more about the event, tradition, creative expression, meaningful place, or organization or institution you have picked for your Missouri Community Legacies project. This research helps establish background, history, and context for the required written report. Research may also include interviewing individuals associated with your subject to learn more.

• If you choose to record and submit interviews with your Missouri Community Legacies project, make sure to complete necessary interview release forms.

Use cameras, audio or video recorders, or a simply a note pad to document your event, tradition, meaningful place, or organization. A complete Missouri Community Legacies project includes a minimum of five photographs that contribute to a better understanding of your subject.

Descriptive information should accompany each photograph submitted, e.g. date, location, names of people in the photographs, etc. You may also gather materials to supplement your Missouri Community Legacies project. These materials may include but are not limited to flyers and programs; magazine and newspaper clippings; posters; tickets; drawings; menus; sound and video recordings; and paper collectibles.

Assemble Your Project

A complete Missouri Community Legacies project includes a three to five page double-spaced written report; a minimum of five but not more than ten photographs; and administrative paperwork.

Your written report should explain the history and significance of the subject of the project and why it was selected. Consider some of the questions raised at the beginning of this field kit to guide your writing.

Photographs provide a visual description of the subject of your Missouri Community Legacies project. Select images that best illustrate the unique or representative aspects of your subject. To help others understand your photographs, please complete a Photograph Log form to accompany your project.

Your project may be supplemented with a variety of materials that may include but are not limited to sound and video recordings, magazine and newspaper clippings, posters, drawings, or ephemera. **Some supplemental materials require additional administrative paperwork.** For example, if you chose to include audio or video content, be sure to complete an Audio / Video Log form. If you chose to include audio or video interviews with individuals associated with your subject, make sure to complete an Interview Release Form for each participant that will allow others to access and use these interviews.

Project materials will be accepted in both physical and digital formats. Accepted electronic formats include PDF; Word document files; jpeg; tiff; wav; mp3; and mpeg.

Complete Your Paperwork

There are a few forms required to accompany each Missouri Community Legacies project. These include a Deed of Gift form, which allows the State Historical Society of Missouri and others to access and use your Missouri Community Legacies project materials; a three to five page double-spaced written report on the particular subject; and a minimum of five but no more than ten photographs and a Photograph Log form. **You can find these forms on the Missouri 2021 website at missouri2021.org.**

As noted above, other forms may need to be included depending upon the types of materials you are sending to supplement the required pieces of the project. You can find these additional forms on the Missouri 2021 website as well.

Submit Your Project

Once you have assembled your documentation project, make sure you have completed all necessary forms. You will find a checklist at the end of the field kit.

When you are ready, send notification to contact@missouri2021.org that your project is complete.

While not required, the State Historical Society of Missouri recommends creating two complete documentation files, one for the State Historical Society of Missouri and one for a local repository, e.g. a public library, historical society, archive, etc.

Once your documentation project is received, staff from the State Historical Society of Missouri will notify you that it has been received and all necessary forms have been completed correctly. Any projects received that do not have appropriate forms completed will be disposed of at the end of the collecting period, December 31, 2021, according to State Historical Society of Missouri standards.

What Happens Next?

Thank you for contributing to Missouri Community Legacies. Your project will have a permanent home at the State Historical Society of Missouri and be available for researchers, teachers and students, and the public to consider for generations to come. During the Bicentennial, selected project materials will be made available through the Missouri 2021 website. At the conclusion of the Bicentennial, your project will be part of a permanent collection at the State Historical Society of Missouri.

Appendix: Checklist

Did you complete your three to five page written report?

Did you compile five to ten photographs to submit with your file? Did you complete a photograph log form for your photographs?

Did you complete a deed of gift form to submit with your file?

Did you conduct audio or video interviews for the project that you are submitting with your file? If so, did you complete interview release forms for each person interviewed?

Are you submitting audio and visual materials with your file? If so, did you complete an audio / video log form to submit with your file?