

HISTORY – The Wyoming Historical Museum is located on the south side of Main Street in Wyoming, Iowa. The building was built by R.S. Williams in 1878 using brick from his factory located in Wyoming. It was operated as a hotel until 1932, when the upstairs was converted into apartments. The downstairs was then the home to many different businesses for fifty years. In 1987 when the town druggist, Marty Botkin, decided to retire – he said that he would like to give the contents of his drugstore to the town of Wyoming --- IF, there was a place to put them. The contents included a soda fountain and an extensive supply of pharmaceutical items.

At this time, the Williams Hotel was in quite bad shape, and total destruction was threatening. A small group of dedicated residents saw the possibility of a museum and went to work. The outside work included replacing the roof and repairing the brick walls. This required salvaging and cleaning brick from homes in the area that were being demolished at the time. Many of the rooms used as apartments had deteriorated through the years. Rotten floors and walls were removed and renovation was well underway in 1987. One room was ready by September of 1988, and the Wyoming Historical Museum opened in November of that same year.

Work has continued for 25 years, and the museum has expanded to use all twenty rooms in the Williams Hotel. Due to the common wall between the hotel and the old post office building (which was close to destruction) --- Moisture was coming through the wall into the hotel building. The museum commission purchased that building and started working. They replaced the roof and walls as a beginning, and have gradually replaced the floor using boards taken from a church that was demolished. The first floor of the old post office was nearly ready to become an annex for the museum, so new windows were installed. Painting was in process and success was in sight, when a fire next to the hotel building nearly destroyed everything that had been made possible through so much hard work.

On July 21, 2013 – The Swinging Door Bar and Grill on the west side of the hotel building burned to the ground, and at one point it was thought that the whole block would go up in flame. Amazingly, not a single item from the museum was lost; however, everything sustained smoke or water damage. Three feet of water had to be pumped out of the basement, and the foundation was repaired. The walls and ceilings of all the rooms were then sealed and repainted. Many of the contents were boxed up and removed for cleaning; however, large items were cleaned on site. The volunteers of Wyoming were then faced with unpacking over 700 boxes, replacing contents in the twenty rooms, making new curtains for nearly thirty windows, doing a new inventory, and making new laminated labels to mark museum items for identification. Although, there are still nearly 200 boxes to unpack ---- the museum is open for visitors. A Grand Re-opening is planned for later this summer or fall, but guests are welcome to stop in and see the work in progress.