

**Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historical Society of Iowa**  
 (December 1, 1999)

State Inventory No. 70-00959  **New**  **Supplemental**  
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Relationship:  Contributing  Noncontributing  
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries  
 National Register Status: (any that apply)  Listed  De-listed  NHL  DOE  
 Review & Compliance No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Non-Extant (enter year) \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Weed's Block  
 other names/site number Pearl Plaza, Field Site #: FS-018

**2. Location**

street & number 208-210 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
 city or town Muscatine  vicinity, county Muscatine  
 Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name \_\_\_\_\_ Township No. \_\_\_\_\_ Range No. \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter of Quarter \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original Town Block(s) 10 Lot(s) 7

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]**

**4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]**

**5. Classification**

Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property	
	If Non-Eligible Property	If Eligible Property, enter number of:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	_____	Contributing _____ Noncontributing _____
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____
	_____ buildings	<u>1</u> _____ buildings
	_____ sites	_____ sites
	_____ structures	_____ structures
	_____ objects	_____ objects
	_____ Total	<u>1</u> _____ Total

Name of related project report or multiple property study (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_ Historical Architectural Data Base Number \_\_\_\_\_

Historical and Architectural Survey and Evaluation of the Downtown Commercial District 70-013

**6. Function or Use**

<b>Historic Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Current Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>02E: Commerce/Trade / Specialty Store (208)</u>	<u>02E: Commerce/Trade / Specialty Store</u>
<u>02B04: Commerce/Trade / Insurance Office (210)</u>	<u>02G01: Restaurant / Café</u>
<u>10F01: Industry / Shell Processing Site</u>	_____

**7. Description**

<b>Architectural Classification</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>05B: Italianate</u>	foundation <u>04B: Sandstone / 03:Brick</u>
_____	walls <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	roof <u>08B: Rolled Asphalt</u>
_____	other _____

**Narrative Description** ( SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	A	Property is associated with significant events.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	B	Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	C	Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	D	Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Muscatine  
City Muscatine

Address 208-210 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

Site Number 70-00959  
District Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Criteria Considerations**

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B Removed from its original location.
- C A birthplace or grave.
- D A cemetery
- E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F A commemorative property.
- G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

17: Industry  
05: Commerce

**Significant Dates**

Construction date 1855  check if circa or estimated date  
Other dates 2001-2003 renovation

**Significant Person**

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

**Architect/Builder**

Architect \_\_\_\_\_  
Builder \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Statement of Significance**  SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Bibliography  See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

**10. Geographic Data**

**UTM References (OPTIONAL)**

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Devin Pettit Vice-Chairman M.H.P.C. (R.L. McCarley, Consultant)  
organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date 11/18/04  
street & number 215 Sycamore Street telephone 264-1550  
city or town Muscatine state IA. zip code 52761

**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)**

**FOR ALL PROPERTIES**

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____

- See continuation sheet or attached **photo & slide catalog sheet** for list of photo roll or slide entries.
- Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

**FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL**

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or non-contributing status)
- Barn:**
  - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
  - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
  - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

**State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line**

Concur with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility:  Yes  No  More Research Recommended  
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluated by (name/title): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

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<u>Weed's Block</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>208-210 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

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## 7. Narrative Description

Weed's Block is a two-part, three-story brick commercial block. Each of the two parts is three bays in width. The block has a sandstone and brick foundation. Brick pilasters define the ends of the building as well as dividing the two parts. The storefronts have been altered with the 2001-2003 remodeling as part of the Pearl Plaza project. The storefronts are recessed with non-historic windows and doors. The upper story windows are two-over-two-light double-hung windows. Though they are non-historic, they are sympathetic to the original design. The windows retain their original decorative stone hoods and sills. A decorative metal cornice with brackets stretches across the façade. The brick parapet wall above the cornice line and gently arched above each part of the block.

The historic photographs show that, with the exception of the storefront, the building façade remains similar to its 1859 and 1900 appearance. The 1859 photo from city directory shows only 208 (because it is an advertisement for Dillaway's). The pediment, brackets, pilasters, and window hoods appear the same as today. The windows in this ad appear to be six-over-six-light double-hung, as compared to the two-over-two double hung windows today. There was also a store sign between the second and third floors, as well as a sign on the storefront cornice. The 1900 photo shows the addition of a large awning or balcony structure added in front of 208-210, the other features remaining the same from 1859 (City Directory 1859; *Picturesque Muscatine* 1901: 85).

The south (rear) elevation is a modern addition made to look like the part they tore down in the remodel/restoration of 2001-2003. There are four modern windows, and two modern entries on the first floor, with one large window on the second with six panes and two smaller windows as well. The third floor has four windows; two larger than the other. There is a large cement patio at this elevation that extends from 212 West to 206 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

The interior has also been remodeled to accommodate the new uses of the Pearl Plaza project. This block along with the buildings from 200 to 212, had a major renovation/restoration of the interiors between 2001 and 2003. Though the main walls remain, cuts were made in interior walls to create an indoor plaza and arched doorways. Bricks from the stable for the building, which was tore down for the restoration, were reused use for some of the new openings and partitions. This stable was located in the back of these buildings, and was replaced by the new rear addition consisting of the porches and lower level garages (Tom and Anne Meeker 2004).

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Weed's Block appears to be appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with prominent businesses in the early settlement period and late 19<sup>th</sup> century in Muscatine. Additionally, it appears to be a contributing structure in a downtown historic district.

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<u>Weed's Block</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
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Weed's Block appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. It is strongly associated with the early settlement period in Muscatine. Chester Weed, an 1841 settler and businessmen, built this block around 1855. It is one of a handful of pre-Civil War buildings remaining in the downtown. Upon completion in 1856, he and his partner James Bridgman moved their mercantile business, C. Weed & Co., into the 210 storefront. Soon after, George Dillaway opened his queensware (china) store in the 208 storefront. Both these businesses were very successful and prominent within the community in this period, and they continued to operate at these locations into the 1870s. Additionally, it is also associated with a prominent late 19<sup>th</sup> century business, Sterneman's Clothing. This was the only wholesale clothing store in Iowa in the late 1880s, and it continued to be a significant local business into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to serving as a wholesale clothing house, clothes were also made at this location. It was one of the major business interests in Muscatine in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century outside of the lumber and pearl button industries.

The overall integrity of the block is good. Though the renovation project altered some aspects of the historic structure, the overall appearance remains intact. Additionally, aspects of the renovation project, such as the windows, were done to be sympathetic with the historic features, as seen in the 1879 and 1900 historic photographs of the building. Thus, this block appears to retain sufficient integrity to be eligible under Criterion A.

Finally, Weed's Block also appears to be a contributing building in a potential downtown historic district. It primarily falls within two historic contexts identified for the district: "Early Settlement" and "19<sup>th</sup> century Business and Industry." Its early history associated with the businesses of Chester Weed and George Dillaway, which contributed significantly to the early development of downtown Muscatine. Additionally, its later history associated with Sterneman's Clothing is also contributing to the district.

This block was built around 1855 for Chester Weed, and he added the building at 206 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in the following year or two. The 1856 city directory lists his office in this location. Additionally, there is mention of this block of buildings being built around the same time as the Presbyterian church, which dates to 1856 (Carlson 1991: 39). The log cabin belonging to Joseph Bridgeman was also moved from next door to Weed park in this year (Graham #162).

In 1856, C. Weed and Company occupied 119 Second (210 West Second Street). Chester Weed came to this town in 1841, following his father Dr. Benjamin Weed, his brother James (who donated Weed Park to the city), and his sister Elizabeth; who married Chester Weed's business partner Joseph Bridgeman. Chester Weed brought with him a camera obscura, probably taking the first daguerreotypes in the West. He operated his own shop for a few years before taking up other interests, including selling insurance. In 1843 he went into the general mercantile business with his brother-in-law, Joseph Bridgman, and they also began an insurance business in 1846. They continued as partners until 1851 when Mr. Bridgman temporarily left. When he returned to the firm, it was reorganized as C. Weed & Company. It was soon after this time that Weed built this block for the business. After completing this block in early 1856, he also tore down the frame building at 206 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., the previous store/office, and built a new brick building in this location that primarily served the insurance business. In 1859 Charles E. Kent became a member of the firm, the name changing to Weed, Bridgman & Kent. After Mr. Kent's retirement, it was

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<u>Weed's Block</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
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changed to Weed & Bridgman, succeeded by Bridgman & Son in 1877. While Chester Weed was involved in several aspects of community life, James Bridgman led a quieter life chiefly focused on this business interest. After Mr. Weed died December 7, 1874, James brought in his sons and concentrated on the insurance side of the business. According to city directories and Sanborn Maps, they conducted their business in the 208 and 210 storefronts, as well as Joseph Bridgeman's home at 222-224 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Bridgman and Sons remained in the 210 storefront until 1888. James served as captain of the Home Guards in Muscatine during the Civil War, and he lived to be the oldest Odd Fellow in the state of Iowa at the time of his death in 1900 (Richman 1911, Vol. 2: 138-139, 141).

Chester Weed also had other business interests in town throughout this period, though the mercantile business was his chief pursuit. He was president of the Muscatine Gas Light & Coke Company on its organization February 19, 1857, and in 1856 began in the pork-packing business in company with others. He was also at one time owner of the Commercial Hotel and acquired half interest in the Muscatine Mills, formerly Bennett's Mills. Chester was president of the Muscatine branch of the State Bank of Iowa when it was first organized in 1858, continuing in that capacity until 1860. He was also a director, furnishing funds for its relief when it was threatened with financial embarrassment. When the bank was reorganized on December 30, 1864, as the Muscatine National Bank, Mr. Weed was elected vice-president. He was known as possessing remarkable foresight and judgment in business affairs, and he was recognized as one of the wealthiest businessmen in the city. Chester Weed died on December 7, 1874 (Richman 1911, Vol. 2: 138-139). The house in which he died still stands at 327 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

While C. Weed & Company operated out of 210 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> St., by 1857 George Dillaway opened his queensware store in the 208 portion of the block. He moved to town in that year from Boston, where he was supposedly a neighbor of Paul Revere. He sold china, crockery, glassware and various silver pieces. (Carlson 1991: 39). After operating successfully at this location for 20 years, Mr. Dillaway decided to build his own three story "commodious brick" building at 118 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in 1877. This new building was destroyed by fire on September 27, 1966 (Muscatine Fire Department 2003: 114). His store became known as "one of the largest and most elegantly arranged of any in the State." Mr. Dillaway was known as one of the most energetic, enterprising businessmen of Muscatine. Similar to Chester Weed, George Dillaway was also prominently involved in community affairs. He was instrumental in securing the construction of the water works in 1875 and held the office of President of the company for two years. He also served as a member of the City Council in 1876 and 1877, and he served as Mayor of Muscatine in 1879, 1880 and 1881 (*Portrait and Biographical Album* 1889: 390; Richman 1911, Vol. 2: chronology).

Charles L. Mull and Sons Wholesale Grocery relocated to the 210 storefront by 1888 according to the Sanborn Maps, first listed in 1889 in the city directory. The wholesale grocery business began in 1864, operating for several years roughly across the street. As the business grew, they looked to expand. Mull and Sons operated here for only a few years before a new building on the southeast corner of Pine and West Second Street in 1891. This building continues to stand (*Picturesque Muscatine*: 85). After Mull and Sons Grocers left, there was a series of different businesses in the 210 storefront, including Jordan and Klein Hardware and Cutlery from 1892 to c.1898, then J. Davidson Furniture Dealer from c.1898 to 1901 and then the Henry Ficken Furniture Store in 1902-1903. In 1904, Henry Ficken gave up this

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business to become Vice-President of the Batterson Department Store at its new location on E. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. The building was then vacant before Hahn Produce moved here by 1907. Hahn Produce stayed through at least 1913, before moving to Front Street.

Bridgman and Sons continued to operate out of the 208 storefront as well as others until 1888, when Sternemans Clothiers moved into the 208 storefront by according to the Sanborn Maps, first listed in 1889 in the city directory. Sterneman's was at that time the only wholesale clothing company in the state of Iowa. The company also made its own clothes. The company was founded by John Sterneman, who had worked for the S&L Cohn Brothers clothiers; George Nietzel, Phil Mackey, and W.F. Bishop. Bishop left in 1900 to form a button company with C.C. Hagerman, called Bishop and Hagerman, and then in 1903 went on to form the Hawkeye Button Company with F.C. Vetter (*Picturesque Muscatine*: 85). Sterneman's stayed at 208 thru December 5, 1912, when a fire broke out at 206 West 2<sup>nd</sup> and destroyed that building, and damaged the merchandise at Sterneman's ("\$75,000 Fire Loss," December 6, 1912, 1). Sterneman's then moved to a new building on Iowa Avenue, across from the Library. This building has since been torn down to make room for the new Central State Bank.

After the fire, there were a number of different businesses in this block over the next few decades, including, an auto service station, then subsequently an auto salvage and then an auto parts store. None of them were particularly important. In 1943, the Muscatine Pearl Works expanded into 208 W. 2<sup>nd</sup>, as well as the neighboring 206. Their main office and factory were located down the street at 218 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The company began in 1898 as the first pearl novelty company in town, and they moved to the larger facility at 218 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> a few years later. They incorporated as the Muscatine Pearl Works in 1920, and they continued to grow. They added facilities at 227 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. in 1939 before expanding into these spaces at 206 and 208 in 1943 (*Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition* 1940). After a fire destroyed their building at 227 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street on October 1, 1961, the company moved all their operations to Highway 61 South (Van Wey 2003).

During this same period the 210 storefront continued the auto parts store that had also been in 208, before the pearl button company was here.

Pearl Products moved into 206-208 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street in 1964, moving here from Highway 61 South, and then staying at this location until 1972. There have been numerous businesses in these buildings since that time. There was a major restoration/renovation from 2001-2003 as part of the Pearl Plaza project.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

"162," Historic Photograph, Graham Collection, Musser Public Library, Muscatine, Iowa.

"\$75,000 Fire Loss," *Muscatine News Tribune*, December 6, 1912, p. 1.

Carlson, Jo Ann. *More History of Muscatine, Iowa*. Muscatine: Musser Public Library, 1991.

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<u>Weed's Block</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>208-210 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

City Directories, Muscatine, Various publishers, 1874-1968. Available at Musser Public Library.

Meeker, Anne and Tom, owners of building, conversation between Devin Pettit and owners, 2004.

*Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition*, May 31, 1940.

"Pearl Button Industry," Vertical File, Musser Public Library, Muscatine, Iowa.

*Picturesque Muscatine*. Muscatine: H.W. Lewis, 1901, p. 85.

*Portrait and Biographical Album of Muscatine County, Iowa*. Chicago: Acme Publishing, 1889

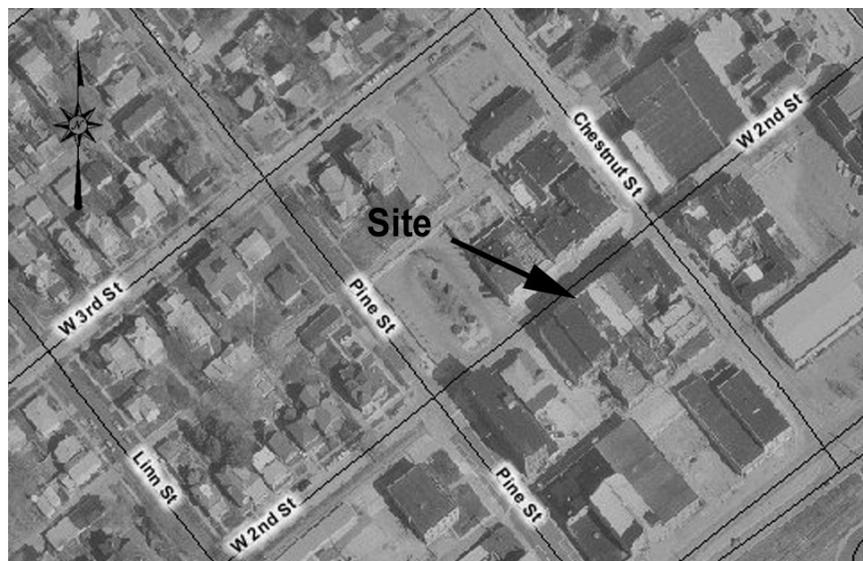
Randall, William. *Little Known Stories of Muscatine*. Vol. 2. Friends of Musser Public Library, Radio program scripts, reprinted 1981.

Richman, Irving B. *History of Muscatine County, Iowa*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing, 1911, Volume 2.

Sanborn Map Company. "Muscatine Iowa," Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. Pelham, N.Y. Sanborn Map Company, 1883, 1888, 1892, 1899, 1905, 1912, 1912, 1919, 1928, 1946. Accessed online at: [sanborn.umi.com](http://sanborn.umi.com)

Van Wey, Mike. *Muscatine Fire Department: 128 Years of History*. Muscatine, 2003, p. 114.

## Location Map



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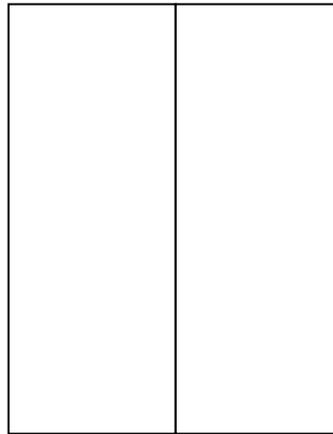
Weed's Block  
Name of Property

Muscatine  
County

208-210 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Address

Muscatine  
City

## Plan



(front – 2<sup>nd</sup> Street)

## Photograph of building (digital image)

