

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

State Inventory No. 70-00159 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 Union Block
 other names/site number Field Site #: FS-024

2. Location

street & number 131-133 West Second 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) 34 Lot(s) W 2/3 Lot 1

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:	
	Enter number of:	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	_____ buildings	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____ sites	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____ structures	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____ objects	_____	_____ objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____ 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

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>02E05: Commerce / Specialty Store / Hardware Store</u>	<u>02G02: Commerce / Restaurant / Restaurant Bar</u>
_____	<u>70: Vacant (133 W. 2nd St.)</u>
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>05B: Late Victorian / Italianate</u>	foundation <u>04C: Stone / Limestone</u>
_____	walls <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	roof <u>08B: Asphalt / Rolled</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 Address 131-133 West Second Street Site Number 70-00159
City Muscatine 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)

05: Commerce

Significant Dates

Construction date 1854 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates _____

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 Maryrose and John Peterschmidt (Member and Volunteer) (R.L. McCarley, Consultant)

organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date October 5, 2004

street & number 215 Sycamore Street telephone 563-264-1550

city or town Muscatine state Iowa 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: _____

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7. Narrative Description

131 and 133 W. 2nd Street were constructed in 1854 as part of the "Union Block". Union Block was a five-part brick Italianate block, including 125-127-129-131-133 W. 2nd St, built in 1854. It was three stories tall, with decorative cornice, brackets, arch windows, and full height pilasters between each storefront. Each façade was three bays wide, with cast hoods above the windows on the third floor. The second floor windows were gently arched, with a column between them ("Second Street, East of Chestnut" 1900; Record Printing Company 1914: 94). Union Block appears often in the early city directories as home to numerous local businesses.

Only the west two parts of the five-part block continue to stand. The highly decorative metal cornice continues to extend across these buildings. Additionally, both buildings retain their original brick detailing on the façade, including dogtooth and arch detailing along the frieze and full height decorative pilasters. The window features described above for the original Union Block are essentially intact at 133 W. 2nd St. This section retains the double-hung arch windows with cast iron hoods on the third story and arched window openings with iron columns on the second floor. The windows have been replaced with single-over-single-light double-hung sashes. The third story windows openings at 131 W. 2nd St. retain their arch cast iron hoods, though these windows have also been replaced with single-over-single-light double-hung sashes. The second floor windows at 131 W. 2nd St. have been modified, with the façade of this story rebuilt with brick and three typical single-over-single-light double-hung windows. The first floor store front of both structures has been modified to suit styles prevalent in the 1970's.

This structure was built on a slightly sloped site, as visible along the west side elevation along Chestnut Street. The original building was five bays deep, with a sloped and stepped parapet with brick dentils and dogtooths defining this section. The front (south) section is two bays wide. The third story windows are single-over-single-light double-hung windows, and the second story windows are covered with plywood. The windows are the same height as the façade windows, replaced by the same type of windows. Repairs to the brick above each windows suggests they may have also had hoods that have been removed. A detailed parapet with dentil design caps the front section, angling up to the more elaborate front façade. The same parapet design continues over the center section (originally the three-bay rear portion of this elevation), but slightly lower than the front section. The center section is three bays wide with the same single-over-single-light double-hung windows on the third floor. A window on the second floor has been replaced by a ventilation fan. A wooden enclosure with stairs has been added to the center portion of this elevation and covers the original second story entry. A second entry is located below grade in this center section. A pilaster defines the original rear corner of the building.

Two rear sections were built prior to 1883. The existing rear section is two bays deep. Due to the slope of the site, the level at the alley on the rear elevation (first story) aligns with the second story of the original buildings. The west elevation of this rear section is two bays wide. These windows are not as tall as the other windows in the building. The windows on the third floor have single-over-single-light double-hung sashes. The second floor windows are undersized aluminum windows with plywood infill. A two-story rear addition was also added prior to 1883. A photo taken c. 1914 titled "View of Thompson

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Bros. Co. Hardware and Seed Store” shows the building extending to the alley (Record Printing Company 1914: 94). The rear two sections, two bays wide each, were removed after the 1914 photo.

The three sections at 125-127-129 W. 2nd Street were remodeled as part of the Broud Department Store in 1948. A fire subsequently destroyed the remodeled sections as the work was near completion, and they were demolished for a new building constructed on this site in 1949.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The early history of this building is locally significant in the history of local hardware merchants and saddlery/harness makers, and the building appears to be individually eligible under Criterion A for the National Register of Historic Places. The remaining portions of Union Block does not appear to be eligible under Criteria C due to the alterations to the block, nor under Criteria B. Additionally, the building appears to contribute to a potential downtown historic district.

The merchants and artisans who lived and worked in the Union Block from it’s creation in 1854 until the First World War were hard working citizens who supplied the local population with harnesses and saddles for transportation, and hammers and nails for shelter. The Union Block merchants were at the center of economic activity in Muscatine throughout the period from 1854 until 1916. The Stone Brothers were one of the earliest hardware merchants in Muscatine, and their business was continued by the Thompson Brothers in the 131 storefront until 1916. As early as 1866, J. Rubelmann operated a saddlery business in the 133 storefront, which was continued by William Van Nostrand in the 1870s. This tanning business grew to one of the largest manufacturing operations in Muscatine in the late 19th century, producing saddlery and other goods. The business continued after Van Nostrand’s death in 1889, expanding significantly, including a later office in Sioux City. This storefront represents the earliest location of this business, connected with the horse collar factory to the rear along Chestnut St. Though three bays of Union Block have been demolished, the remaining two bays are associated with this prominent, local history. The building retains several features typically of the Italianate style in the 1850s, including tall arch windows, a highly decorative brick cornice, and arch detailing. Currently, it reads as a two-section commercial block, as it has stood since the 1948 fire that destroyed the other three sections. Though the storefronts have been remodeled, the upper stories still clearly read as a historic Italianate building, particularly 133. The cornice is perhaps the most elaborate in downtown Muscatine. The Union Block appears eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with these early, prominent businesses in Muscatine.

Additionally, Union Block is a contributing structure in a potential downtown historic district. It falls within two historic contexts identified for this district: “Early Settlement” and “19th century Business and Industry.” Its business history associated with local hardware merchants and saddlery/harness makers reflects a significant aspect of Muscatine’s history and contributes to the historic context of the downtown district. Its two-section appearance dates to 1949, within the period of significance for this potential district.

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The earliest hardware merchants were brothers Charles and William R. Stone, who were, according to the 1859-60 city directory, at No. 2 Union Block, which is 131 West 2nd Street. They were listed as "wholesale and retail dealer in hardware, farming tools and seeds". The Stone Brothers continued at 131 W. 2nd St. until 1875, when they sold the business to Robert T. Thompson.

Robert T. Thompson was originally from Ohio, having settled in Muscatine County in 1858. He was in the grain business in Atalissa, Iowa for a brief period, and then moved to Muscatine in 1860, serving as Muscatine County Treasurer and later Muscatine County Treasurer in the 1860s and early 1870s. In 1872, he bought into the hardware business in Muscatine, which he carried on until 1878. In 1878 Mr. Thompson retired, leaving the hardware business to his two sons, William L. and Theron Thompson, who operated the business as Thompson Bros. (Richman 1911: 572; *Portrait and Biographical Album of Muscatine County, Iowa* 1889: 282). Thompson Brothers Hardware Co. continued as a prosperous business until 1916. From 1900 to 1916, they operated in 133 as well as 131. Theron Thompson was a tinner by trade, attended the University of Iowa, then returned to Muscatine to partner with his brother in the hardware business. He was a director of the Hershey State Bank and the Puritan Ice Co., as well as president of the Detthoff Hardware Co. of Muscatine. William L. Thompson married in 1890 and moved, because of his poor health, to Las Vegas, Nevada. He engaged in the hardware business there for about twelve years, but also retained his interest in the Muscatine store (Richman 1911: 153, 572).

The 1859-60 city directory indicates Crane and Evans, a wholesale grocer, to be the occupant of No. 1 Union Block, which is 133 West 2nd Street. The 1866 city directory shows J. Rubelmann, a harness and saddle maker at this address. Mr. Rubelmann emigrated from Germany, where he learned his trade. He arrived in Muscatine in 1861 and established J. Rubelmann and Co. In 1879, they tanned leather in Tennessee, finishing it in Muscatine. Their business in Muscatine was "the leading leather, saddlery and hardware house here, doing a large and extensive trade and an exclusively jobbing business." (*History of Muscatine County, Iowa* 1879: 618).

Mr. Rubelmann employed William H. Van Nostrand who, according to the 1875 city directory, continued the saddlery at 133 W. 2nd St. The 1883 Sanborn map shows hardware and leather in the front portion of the building, with wholesale saddlery in the rear section. A small walkway connects this building to the horse collar factory at 213 Chestnut. The 1888 and 1892 Sanborn maps show similar uses, with a hide warehouse at the far rear of the building. William H. Van Nostrand died in early January 1889. An article in the *Journal* on January 8, 1889 noted that J.H. Weise, the business manager, would continue the business for a while. Concern was stated about the future of this business, as his heirs were non-residents, and the article urged local businessmen to think of investing in the business. From 15 to 20 skilled workmen were regularly employed, and the business amounted to \$100,000 per year, with room for growth ("Van Nostrand Establishment," January 8, 1889).

The Van Nostrand Saddlery Co. was incorporated on February 14, 1890 (Richman 1911: Vol. 1, 474). The officers were respected Muscatine businessmen interested in keeping the business in town, with J. Carskaddan, president; A. Sander, vice president; and C.H. Spaethe, manager and secretary. They continued to operate at 133 W. 2nd through 1894 when they moved to a new building on Front Street (which has been demolished). The St. Louis Trade Review in August 1899 reported that Van Nostrand's

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was "The only manufacturer and wholesale dealers in saddlery and saddlery hardware, harness and strap work in Muscatine. Also, large dealers in leather, occupy a modern structure on Front Street. This contains their store and their perfectly equipped harness, collar and saddlery factory. The VanNostrand Saddlery Co. manufactures and handles everything necessary to appoint a horse or adorn a mule. They make a specialty of the Brownson Metal Sewed Collar, considered by teamsters the best on the market. They carry an immense stock of other harness goods of the very best quality. They employ regularly sixty men and keep a force of traveling salesmen on the road. The territory covered includes Iowa and part of Illinois, and the demand for their goods shows a continued increase, as their uniformly excellent quality and fair price becomes apparent to horse owners." (Carlson 1997: 191). The Van Nostrand Saddlery Company continued to expand in the early 20th century, opening a branch location in Sioux City.

The 1899 Sanborn map shows a grocery at 133, and a hardware store at 131, with a tin shop on the third story. The grocer, James H. St. John, continued to operate here until 1900, at which time Thompson Brothers Hardware expanded into 133 W. 2nd St from 131. During the period 1895 thru 1907 a noted attorney, J. Carskadden had his offices on the second floor of 133 W. 2nd St. ("Second Street, looking East," c.1900). The 1905 and 1912 Sanborn map shows the hardware store spanning both these storefront in Union Block.

During the years after World War I, the occupants of 131 W. 2nd St. were varied, including dry goods stores from 1919 to 1929, a grocer from 1936 to 1937 and taverns from 1940 through 1959. Chaudoin Electric Co., an electrical contractor and appliance sales merchant was located at 133 W. 2nd St. after 1919. G. A. Chaudoin learned the electrical business as a stage manager for the Grand Opera House in Muscatine. He also worked for the early Muscatine Lighting Co. and operated a street car for eight years. He began his business in 1908, moving later to 133 West 2nd Street (*Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition* 1940).

The adjoining three sections of the 1854 Union Block structure spanning 125-127-129 W. 2nd St were demolished following a fire in 1948. Broud's Army Store first appears in Muscatine city directories at 123 and 125 W. 2nd Street in 1927. J.C. (Joe) Broud remodeled both store fronts in 1940 (*Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition*. May 31, 1940, 7). Broud continued his business as a hardware store at 123 and 125 W. 2nd Street until 1946. He then purchased the two properties at 127 and 129 West 2nd Street and undertook a major remodeling of the entire business complex. Then called Broud's Department Store, the resulting storefront then appeared to be one store, rather than four individual store facades. In September 1948 the remodeling was nearly complete and the store was fully stocked with new merchandise, when a fire broke out. The fire totally gutted the newly remodeled structure and destroyed its contents (Blaze Destroys Broud's Store," September 12, 1948, 1; "Set Fire Loss at Broud's Near Quarter Million Dollars" September 13, 1948, 1). Joe C. Broud regrouped and rebuilt his department store in 1949. He established temporary quarters for his business and kept his employees working during the time it took to rebuild. The new and current structure completed in 1949 is almost identical to the 1948 remodeled appearance of the three story structures (70-00957). However, the rebuilt structure, not needing the third story inherited with the previous existing structures, was only two stories with a tall parapet rather than a full three-story structure ("Business And Recreational Facilities Expansion,"

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December 30, 1949, 11). Thus, the two remaining section of Union Block at 131-133 have stood on their own since 1949.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Carlson, JoAnn, ed. *Muscatine History Notes*. Volume 3 p. 191; compiled by Carlson and Day of Musser staff, 1997

City Directories, Muscatine. Various publishers, 1859-1959. Available at the Musser Public Library.

History of Muscatine County, Iowa. Chicago: Western Historical Co., 1879

Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition, May 31, 1940

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

Record Printing Company (RPC). *Muscatine, Iowa, The Pearl City: Pearl Button Center of the World*. Muscatine: Record Printing Company, c.1914.

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, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1883, 1888, 1892, 1899, 1907, 1912, 1919, 1928, 1946. Accessed online at: sanborn.umi.com

"Second Street: East of Chestnut", E.L. Graham photograph #GR89, 1900. Musser Public Library, Muscatine.

"Second Street, looking East," Muscatine, Iowa, Chicago: T.C. Co., c.1900. Private collection, J. Peterschmidt.

"The Van Nostrand Establishment," *Muscatine Journal*. January 8, 1889.

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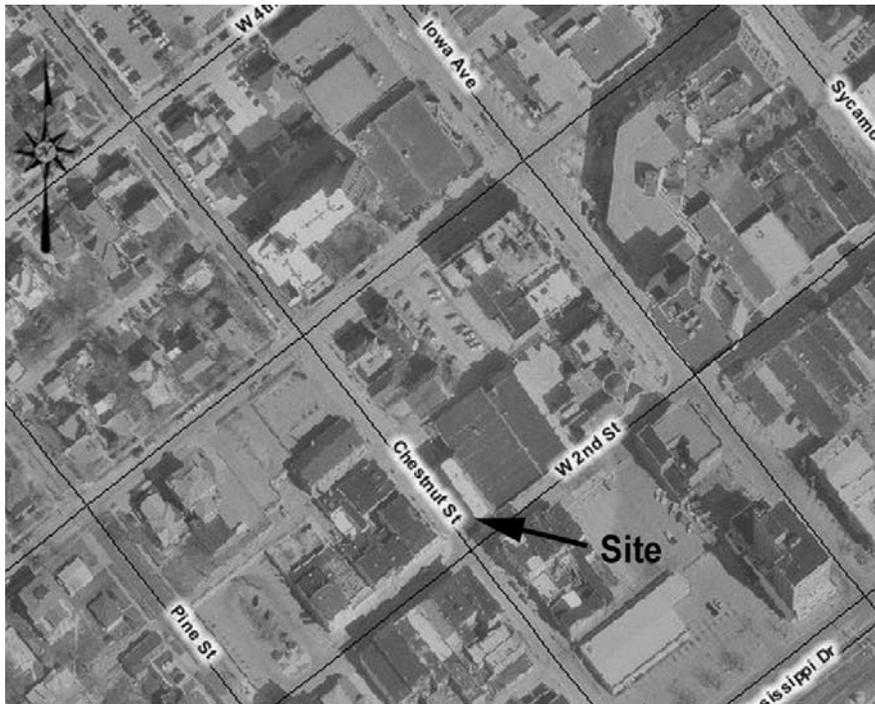
Union Block
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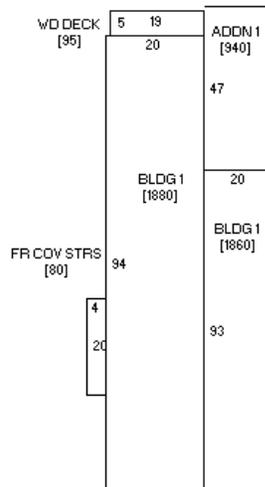
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Location Map



Plan (from assessor's office)



(front)

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Photograph of building (digital image)

