

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

State Inventory No. 70-00375 **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 Schmidt Shoe Factory
 other names/site number Field Site #: FS-029

2. Location

street & number 115 Chestnut 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) 11 Lot(s) S 40' of Lot 10

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 <u>1</u> Noncontributing _____
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
	_____ Total	_____ 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>02E: Commerce/Trade/Specialty Store/(shoes)</u>	<u>60: Unknown (possibly vacant)</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
_____	foundation _____
_____	walls <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	roof <u>15A: Synthetics/Rubber</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 115 Chestnut Street Site Number 70-00375
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 1870 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates c.1909

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 Deb Pohl, MHPC member & Jim Rudisill, City of Muscatine (R.L. McCarley, Consultant)

organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date February 23, 2005

street & number 215 Sycamore telephone 563-264-1554

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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<u>Schmidt Shoe Factory</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>115 Chestnut Street</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

7. Narrative Description

This c.1870 brick structure has a three-story front section with a roof that slopes down to form a two-story rear section. The brick is laid in 7:1 common bond. The Sanborn maps show a two-story building on this site from 1883 through 1905. The maps appear to depict a building similar to the adjacent 117 Chestnut – two-story with a side-gable roof – as is more clearly depicted on the 1874 Birds-eye View of Muscatine (Koch 1874). A rear two-story addition appears between 1892 and 1899. In 1912, a third-story is also depicted. Based on visual evidence and the overall form of the building, it appears that the third story was added to the existing building, and it only extended the front portion of the building.

The storefront has been altered by the installation of concrete block, with a steel beam lintel over the original opening. An entry is framed into the concrete blocks. The second and third stories have three double-hung windows. The second story sashes have been covered, and their openings appear to have been modified, likely in the early 20th century remodeling. The third story windows appear to have three-over-single-light double-hung sashes, which would have been common in the 1905-12 period when this story was apparently added. A small decorative metal cornice extends across the top of the building. It has two large end brackets, smaller middle brackets, and a frieze band of swags.

Although most of the north elevation is covered by the adjoining building, the sloping third-story section does contain two openings on this side. Both openings are covered over and have arched brick lintels over them. The west opening is about half the size of the east opening, which appears from its height to be an entry.

The south elevation extends along the alley. On the original building, there are no openings on the first story. The second story contains four openings, three windows and one entry. Two windows have been filled with concrete block, and the third is covered. The second story entry has a deteriorated wood panel door, possibly historic, with a boarded up light in the upper half. The top story is a full three stories at the front (west) and slopes to two stories at the rear (east). There is a single window opening in the full third-story portion and a small window with unidentifiable sashes in the sloping third-story section. A large opening has been filled with concrete block.

The building has a two-story rear addition constructed in the 1890s. The south elevation of the rear addition contains three openings, two boarded up windows and an entry with a wood door on the first story. The second-story openings include three openings, all windows. Though brick segmental arch lintels are visible, they have been filled in to create square openings. The larger window to the west is composed of paired double-hung windows. An older arch lintel to the right indicates that this windows was enlarged. The middle opening is covered. The third opening is a small opening on the east edge of the second story. The brick arch lintel over this opening is offset over the opening, with about one-third extending over no opening.

There is a second rear addition, approximately 1½ stories, that has several openings on the south elevation. The lower story has two openings, one entry and one window. The entry has been reframed to

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a smaller opening, with a steel plate over an assumed entrance in the west side. The rest of the entry is covered with wood siding. To the right of this entry is a small window opening that is covered with a steel plate. A cement lintel stretches across both openings. A vent or some type of loading chute is located to the right of this opening. The upper story has a steel door located about in the center of the building. Two other window openings are located on this elevation. The left opening is covered with a steel plate, while the right opening is barred. Flat cement lintels also extend across these openings. There are no openings on the rear of the addition.

The only building permit discovered for 115 Chestnut was a 1995 permit approved for office remodeling (City of Muscatine Building & Zoning Department 1995). This would seem to indicate the renovation work was interior. It is unknown when the storefront was filled with concrete block.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

This building appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and B. It also appears to be a contributing building in a potential downtown historic district.

The Schmidt Shoe Factory has a strong connection to both 19th and early 20th century business development in the community. Schmidt originally constructed this building in 1871 after a fire destroyed his earlier building on Front Street. He made shoes at this location, living above the storefront, until his death in 1909. After Schmidt died in 1909, Harry Kern, who Schmidt had raised, took over the shoe business. He constructed a third floor to the building in 1911, and according to later city directories, used both it and the second floor as a residence. Although the third story does affect the integrity of the original building, Kern continued to use the building as a shoe factory until sometime between 1913 and 1916, according to the city directories. The building, however, does appear to be one of only four extant buildings in the downtown that formerly were shoe factory sites. Each of the other three sites has undergone substantial alterations that have significantly impacted their historic integrity to a much greater extent than this building. It does not appear any of the three other extant shoe factories doubled as the home for the manufacturer, nor that any of the other buildings were constructed expressly for a shoe factory. The building retains a substantial portion of its integrity, despite the alteration to its storefront. Thus, the Schmidt Shoe Factory appears to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association and significance as a shoe factory.

The Schmidt Shoe Factory would appear to be a contributing building to a potential downtown historic district. It falls within two historic contexts of identified for the district: "19th Century Business and Industry" and "20th Century Business and Industry." It operated as a prominent shoe manufacturing site in Muscatine from 1871 into the early 20th century. This history significantly contributes to the industrial and commercial nature of the downtown district. The addition of the third story by Kern around 1909 reflects the evolving history of the building and business as it changed hands.

From a review of city directories, it appears Schmidt constructed the building in 1871 following a fire at his earlier business site. Schmidt immigrated to Muscatine in 1868 from Germany. Shortly after arriving

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here he started a shoe shop where he made custom made shoes for local residents ("Mayor Schmidt Dies Late Today," March 27, 1909, 6). The Schmidt Shoe Factory began operating on Chestnut in 1871 following the fire on the corner of Front Street (Mississippi) and Iowa Avenue. When an early morning blaze on August 2, 1871 in Muscatine threatened to engulf more than the two buildings already on fire, townspeople took quick action to try and reduce the threat. A bucket brigade was formed to haul water from the river to throw on the fire and a small shop used by Barney Schmidt to manufacture shoes was torn down to keep the fire from spreading. After this point, he moved his operations to Chestnut. In the 1874-75 city directory, he is listed on the "e.s. of Chestnut" with his residence at the same location. The 1876-77 directory has him at 13 Chestnut. He then is listed on the "e.s. of Chestnut 5 s. of 2d in the 1877-78 directory. Other businesses on Chestnut that are listed in the 1874-75 directory include tinsmith J. Foley at 15 Chestnut. That business is identified on the "e.s. Chestnut 4 s of 2d" in the 1877-78 directory. A review of the 1869-70 does not reveal any possible connection to 13 Chestnut with any existing building, but tinsmith C.W. Fisher is listed as operating a business on the "e.s. Chestnut bet. Front and 2d." This would appear to be Foley's shop and provide some evidence that Schmidt might have constructed his building. The 1883-86 directory has the current address of 115 Chestnut and his residence the same.

According to the 1874-75 city directory, there were 17 boot and shoe manufacturers operating in the community during that time. Ten of these manufacturers had been operating before Schmidt opened his factory on Chestnut Street, but the number of factories began dropping soon after that. By 1887, only six of the factories, including Schmidt's business, were still operating. This building appears to be one of only four extant buildings in the downtown that formerly were shoe factory sites. Although Jacob Braunwarth opened one of the first shoe factories in Muscatine, he apparently moved his shop between 1883 and 1888 to a new location. His 1888 shop was located at 112 E. Second (extant within a commercial block but significant lost of integrity with the later third story demolition). His first shop appears to be non-extant. John Schmidt, no known relation to Barney, also operated a shoe factory before Barney. John Schmidt's shop was located at 207 W. Second. This building is also extant, but was substantially remodeled in 1953. The final known shoe manufacturer was T.S. Stewart at 127 E. Second. Stewart eventually sold out to his employee, John Wilson. The shoe factory was located in the top story of this building, but that story was eventually razed and the storefront was remodeled in 1953. Additionally, Schmidt's building was specifically constructed as a shoe factory, while many other businesses were located in other commercial buildings.

Interestingly, Schmidt also launched an effort to upgrade the city's fire fighting equipment. Although only a recent immigrant to Muscatine, the German-born Schmidt began working to form a new fire fighting company for the city. The incentive for this effort appears to have come from the newspaper accounts of the August fire. "Had a fire engine been upon the ground, the St. Louis Hotel would undoubtedly have been saved," the Muscatine Journal reported (Muscatine Journal 1871, 4). The paper concluded the report with a final reminder to the citizens that every fire in the city demonstrated the community's need for a fire engine. The loss of his building and the obvious need for additional fire fighting equipment appears to have struck a nerve with Schmidt. The Champion Hose, Hook and Ladder company was formed on January 7, 1875. "... Schmidt was a leading spirit in the organization of the ... company," the Journal reported several years later ("Mayor Schmidt Dies Late Today," March 27, 1909, 6).

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Schmidt lived in a portion of the building, and died unexpectedly at his home after suffering a series of internal hemorrhages there ("Mayor Schmidt Dies Late Today," March 27, 1909, 6). Schmidt was "long a prominent shoe merchant and twice mayor of Muscatine" according to Richman, prior to his death on March 27, 1909 (Richman 1911: Vol. 2, 9). Schmidt was mayor of Muscatine during three separate, one-year terms. First elected in 1900, he was also elected in 1908 and 1909. At the time he died, Schmidt had just been re-elected to his third term as mayor ("12 Different Presidents and 40 Mayors Have Led City Through 100 Year Span," May 31, 1940, Section 6, page 22). According to his obituary, the residents of Muscatine genuinely were grieved by his death. Planners expected a large attendance to his funeral and because no other building was suitable, held it at the Princess Theatre. The Muscatine Journal reported "nearly every business house closed between 1:30 p.m. and 2:15 p.m. Factory operations also stopped for a 10 minutes period at 4:15 p.m. while the casket was lowered into the grave ("City Silently Mourns," March 30, 1909, 1). The city council also passed a resolution to express the official sorrow of the city in the mayor's death ("Tributes to Mayor Schmidt," Muscatine Journal, March 29, 1909, p. 7). This is the only building identified in Muscatine to be associated with Barney Schmidt.

Upon Schmidt's death in 1909, Harry Kern continued to operate the "shoe house of B. Schmidt." Kern was the son of a brick mason who lived in Des Moines but maintained Muscatine ties. Kern was raised by Barney Schmidt and began working at the shoe company in 1892 at age 15. Richman noted in 1911: "A man of excellent business ability and sound judgment, Mr. Kern is now conducting the enterprise in a manner that insures the continuance of the extensive patronage which the house has long enjoyed" (Richman 1911: Vol. 2, 9). It is possible that the third story was added in 1909, when the operation of the plant passed to Kern. The Sanborn maps show that it was added between 1905 and 1912. He continued to operate the business until sometime between 1916 and 1919. By 1919 he was listed as a clerk at the Wilson Shoe Store. He died in 1922. Kern was a veteran of the Spanish-American War, serving with Company C, 15th Iowa Vol. Infantry in 1898. He continued to serve with the 54th Iowa National Guard for over 20 years. He served as Muscatine mayor from 1914-15 ("12 Different Presidents and 40 Mayors Have Led City Through 100 Year Span," May 31, 1940, Section 6, page 22).

Later businesses expanded their operations to include the neighboring building at 117 Chestnut. These businesses only operated for a year or two, until Dick Anderson began operating a used parts dealership in the buildings in 1923. Muscatine Used Parts assumed operations in the combined structures in 1940 and continued to operate there into the 1950s.

9. Major Bibliographical References

"12 Different Presidents and 40 Mayors Have Led City Through 100 Year Span," *Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition*, May 31, 1940, Section 6, page 22.

"Arrange Funeral of Mayor Schmidt," *Muscatine Journal*, March 29, 1909, page 5

"City Bows In Grief At Death Of Mayor Schmidt," *Muscatine Journal*, March 29, 1909, page 2

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City Directories, Muscatine. Various publishers, 1856-present. Available at the Musser Public Library.

“City Silently Mourns; Mayor’s Obsequies Held,” *Muscatine Journal*, March 30, 1909, page 1.

Koch, Augustus. *Bird’s-eye View of the City of Muscatine, Muscatine County, Iowa*. Koch, 1874. In the collections of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

“Mayor Schmidt Dies Late Today,” *Muscatine Journal*, March 27, 1909, page 6

“Obituary of Harry Kern,” *Muscatine Journal*, July 15, 1922, page 12.

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

Sanborn Map Company, New York. Maps of the City of Muscatine dated September 1883, August 1888, October 1892, August 1899, December 1905, February 1912, July 1919, March 1928 and June 1946.

“Three Buildings Burned – Loss Over \$6,000,” *Muscatine Journal*, August 2, 1871, page 4.

“Tributes to Mayor Schmidt Expressed In Resolution,” *Muscatine Journal*, March 29, 1909, page 7.

Location Map



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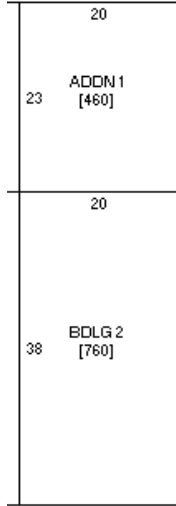
Schmidt Shoe Factory
Name of Property

Muscatine
County

115 Chestnut Street
Address

Muscatine
City

Plan (from assessor's office)



(front - Chestnut)

Photograph of building (digital image)

