

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

State Inventory No. 70-00467 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 Muscatine Post Office
 other names/site number Muscatine County Community Services Building; Field Site #: FS-038

2. Location

street & number 315 Iowa Avenue
 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) 56 Lot(s) 8,9, and 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)	Enter number of:	Contributing Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____ buildings	<u>1</u> _____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____ sites	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____ structures	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____ 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

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>04F: Government / Post Office</u>	<u>04E: Government / Government Office</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>06A: Late 19th Century Revivals / Beaux Arts</u>	foundation <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	walls <u>04C: Limestone (Bedford)</u>
_____	roof <u>08A: Asphalt/Shingle</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input 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 315 Iowa Avenue

Site Number 70-00467
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)

26: Politics/Government

02: Architecture

Significant Dates

Construction date

1909 check if circa or estimated date

Other dates

1937- enlarged building, and 2000-2001 remodel

Significant Person

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

Architect/Builder

Architect

James Knox Zuegler

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 John Sayles, Volunteer, and Devin Pettit, Historic Preservation Commission (R.L. McCarley, consultant)

organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date September 23, 2004

street & number 215 Sycamore Street telephone 563-263-6860

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

Page 3

<u>Muscatine Post Office</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>315 Iowa Avenue</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Address	City

7. Narrative Description

The original building was completed in 1909 with approximate dimensions of 105' long and 56' deep. A two bay rear addition was added in 1937, creating the current five-bay deep building. The original detailing and materials of the building were matched, and it appears that the building was constructed at one time.

The post office is a one-story, five-bay, Beaux Art structure constructed of Bedford limestone. The foundation is constructed of brick as evidenced in photograph #OG716-C. The façade (west; Iowa Ave) includes four basement windows. The north windows are paired two-over-two-light, and the south are paired one-over-one-light. The main level of the façade is divided into a center section with side section. The double-door entry is centered on the façade, and it has keystones and decorative treatments, as well as a three-light transom. This entrance is served by a handicap ramp, which was designed to be complimentary to the buildings architecture in 2000. On either side of the entry is a set of windows composed of a large one-over-one-light double-hung center window flanked by smaller one-over-one-light double-hung windows. These windows appear to retain their historic style of sash. The windows also have three-light transoms, keystones, and carved decorative treatments. Each of the side sections has a two-over-two-light double-hung window with paired vertical three-light storms and a two-light transom. The historic style appears to have been two-over-two-light double-hung windows with a two-light transom. Each "corner" of these side sections have carved detail similar to quoins. Carved bands also extend across the façade along the bottom of the frieze. "Muscatine County" is etched into the frieze, with dentils under the cornice line. There is a balustrade on the roof, as typical of the Beaux Arts style. The hip-roof is centered on the original building (front three bays) and has asphalt shingles. The roof of the rear addition appears slightly sloped but flat.

The north elevation (4th Street) has a cornerstone on the northwest elevation with "1908" inscribed. The windows on this elevation include four basement windows that are paired two-over-two-light. The main floor has four two-over-two-light double-hung windows that have paired vertical three-light storms, two-light transoms, and keystones. There is an entry with a keystone and transom, and is served by stairs. This entry is for employees only. The west three bays were constructed in 1909, and the east two bays were constructed in 1937. The materials and details match on both these sections, and it is impossible to determine through a visual inspection only that these bays were constructed at different times. Carved quoins are found on each corner. The carved frieze bands, wide frieze, dentils, cornice line, and balustrade continue around this elevation. The south elevation (side alley) has the same style basement and main level windows, quoins, and building entablature detail as the north elevation. There is an entry with transom at the basement level that was added during the 2000-01 remodel.

The east elevation (1937 section) has four two-over-two-light double-hung windows with paired vertical three-light storms, two-light transoms, and keystones. The carved detailing on the other elevations continues on this elevation. There has also been an addition added, probably in the 1940's. It was constructed of yellow brick and can still be seen on part of the addition, but most of this brick is now clad with vertical metal siding. There is an entrance on the north end of this addition, and a loading entrance on the east elevation.

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 4

<u>Muscatine Post Office</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>315 Iowa Avenue</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
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After the post office moved out in 1998, the building stood vacant for a few years as it was remodeled. During this remodeling phase, the handicap ramp was added in front of the structure. The windows and doors were also replaced at this time. As can be seen in early postcard images of the structure, the new windows appear to match the historic style of the original windows. There was also remodeling of the interior for its new tenant, Muscatine County, with many of the original features kept in place. When remodeling was complete in July 2001, county and social service agencies moved into the structure.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Muscatine Post Office is individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. An opinion of eligibility was determined offered by the SHPO in 1999, prior to the 2000-01 remodeling. Plans were submitted at this time for approval.

Though some modifications to the Post Office have occurred, the building still stands perhaps as Muscatine's best example of the Beaux Arts style. This style, popular around the turn-of-the-century, is characterized by many features seen on this building, including the roof balustrade, classical detailing, and form and proportions. Alterations such as the handicap ramp, while detracting somewhat from the historic appearance, do not compromise the understanding of this structure as a Beaux Arts design. Other alterations during the 1999-2001 remodeling are generally sympathetic to the historic structure. Additionally, its construction occurred during a time of "civic pride and improvements" in Muscatine. In the early 20th century, a private and public effort occurred in Muscatine to improve the buildings and services offered by the community, including the construction of a new courthouse, city hall, library, theater, and other structures in addition to the post office. The construction of this post office reflects this civic movement, and it was located in the same block of Iowa as the new library and Y.M.C.A. (both demolished). Thus, the Post Office appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C.

Though separated from the historic downtown buildings by non-historic buildings at the south end of this block on Iowa, at the time of its construction its proximity was a key attraction for the new building. The post office moved here from the heart of the downtown, and this location was viewed as still connected to this area. Additionally, it has historically played a key role in the daily business of the downtown area. It does fall within one key historic context identified for the district: "Civic Pride and Accomplishment." However, replacement of the historic Musser Library and Y.M.C.A., and construction of two new bank buildings on Iowa has separated the Muscatine Post Office from the remainder of the downtown. Though historically associated, it does not appear that the post office will fall within the boundary of a potential downtown historic district due to the presence of these non-contributing buildings.

This building was completed in 1909, after moving from 109-111 Iowa Avenue, where it had been since about 1885.

In the 1911 *History of Muscatine*, published soon after construction was completed, Richman writes: "Early in the year 1909 one of the finest federal buildings was completed and occupied. It stands on the

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 5

<u>Muscatine Post Office</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>315 Iowa Avenue</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
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northeast corner of Iowa Avenue and Fourth Street, and the contract price of its construction was \$65,232. The site of the new post office is a very desirable one. It is but a block from the heart of the business center of the city and is very convenient for the residents. The main body of the structure is of finest white Bedford stone, with trimmings, the windows and corners, in cut stone. The main entrance faces on Iowa Avenue, while there is a side entrance on Fourth Street, near the Iowa Avenue corner. Entrances for employees are at the rear of the building which faces the east. The building measures 100x50 feet and stands almost flush with the two streets. At the rear is a macadamized entrance for teams, which separates the building from a beautiful grass plot, 25x30 feet in width. The building has a magnificent exterior view and the furniture and finishing of the interior is in keeping with buildings of that character in all of the large cities of the country. It stands out prominently as a strong feature in beautiful building effects of the city and is an object of pride to every inhabitant in the place. With the site and the appurtenances the new post office building cost about \$125,000" (Richman 1911, Vol. 1: 292-293).

There was an addition to the original building that was completed in 1937. This is the rear (east) two bays of the main building (Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition 1940: 86). The addition was done in such a manner that it is nearly impossible to tell that it is an addition. The materials and detailing were matched to the original building. Only from a distance behind the balustrade is it visible that the hip roof is only centered on the front three bays, indicating the rear addition.

An addition was added sometime between 1928 and 1946 according to Sanborn Maps. This addition was a small rectangular section centered on the rear façade. Originally this was used as a loading dock for mail that was delivered to the post office. It is currently used for a food pantry for Community Services.

The post office remained at this location until 1998 when it relocated to its present location at Cedar and Houser Streets. After the post office moved out in 1998, the building stood vacant for several years as it was remodeled. During this remodeling phase, the handicap ramp was added in front of the structure. The windows and doors were also replaced at this time. As can be seen in early postcard images of the structure, the windows have changed from wood to metal when remodeling was complete in July 2001, county and social service agencies moved into the structure.

9. Major Bibliographical References

City Directories, Muscatine. Various publishers, various dates. Available at Musser Public Library.

"From a Hat to a Model Structure" Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition, May 31, 1940, 86.

#OG716-C, 1909, Oscar Grossheim Photograph Collection. Available at the Musser Public Library.

Richman, Irving. *History of Muscatine County*. Vol. 1. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1911.

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 6

Muscatine Post Office
Name of Property

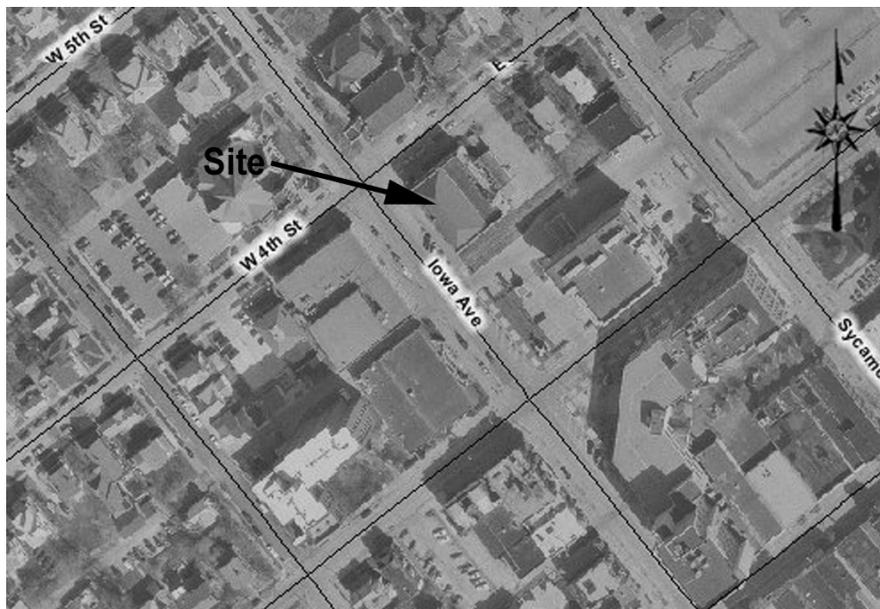
Muscatine
County

315 Iowa Avenue
Address

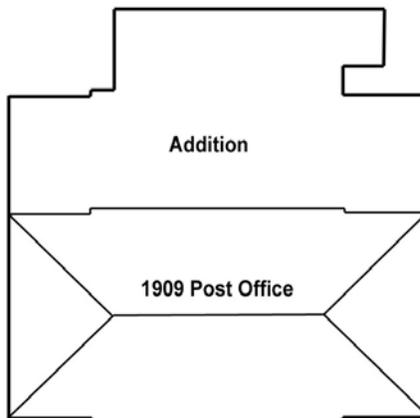
Muscatine
City

Sanborn Map Company. Muscatine, Iowa, Sanborn fire insurance maps. Pelham N.Y: Sanborn Map Company, 1905,1912,1919,1928,1946. Accessed online at: sanborn.umi.com

Location Map



Plan



(front – Iowa Ave)

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 7

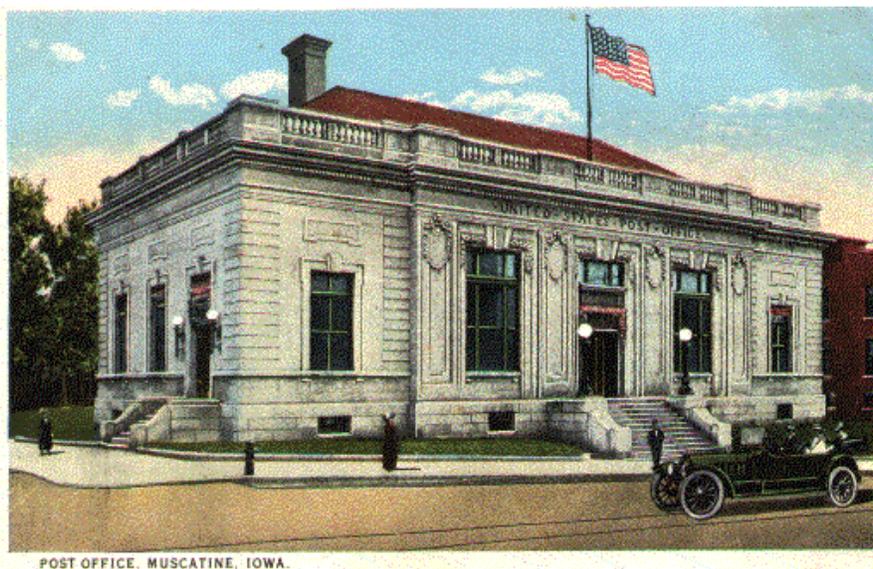
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Name of Property

Muscatine
County

315 Iowa Avenue
Address

Muscatine
City

Historic postcard image:



Photograph of building (digital image)

