

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

State Inventory No. 70-00458  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 Fitzgerald Block  
 other names/site number Field Site #: FS-044

**2. Location**

street & number 109-111-113 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) Lot(s) S40' of N60' of Lot 1, N20' of Lot 1, N60' of W. 1/3 of Lot 2

**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>04F: Government/Post Office</u>	<u>02E08: Commerce/Trade/Beauty Shop</u>
<u>14D10: Transportation/Bus Station</u>	<u>02E: Specialty Store</u>
<u>14A02: Transportation/Train Depot-Interurban</u>	_____

**7. Description**

<b>Architectural Classification</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>05: Late Victorian</u>	foundation <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	walls <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	roof _____
_____	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 109-111-113 Iowa Avenue

Site Number 70-00458  
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; 05: Commerce;

30: Transportation

**Significant Dates**

*Construction date*

1885  check if circa or estimated date

*Other dates*

1957: New Front for 109-111

**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 May 20, 2005

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

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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<u>Fitzgerald Block</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>109-111-113 Iowa Avenue</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Address	City

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## 7. Narrative Description

The Fitzgerald Block is a three story, three section, brick commercial block. The building at 113 was already standing when 109-111 was built in 1885, and was incorporated with new Queen Anne detailing to look like 109-111. The only changes at 113 appear to be at the cornice/frieze level of the building with the removal of cornice and brackets. It should be noted however that only 109-111 is specifically mentioned in city directories as being the Fitzgerald Block (Semi-Centennial Edition Muscatine Journal, January 1891; 77; GR 52,1877). The storefront on 109-111 was altered in 1957 (Muscatine Journal December 30,1957;section 4 pg.5). An 1891 view of the building shows that 109-111-113 had similar upper stories, with the simple lintel detail connected in a “zig-zag” appearance across the building. The detail on 109-111 appears to be stone, while the detail on 113 may have only been painted. The 1891 view shows the current decorative tops of the lintels above the “band” on 113.

The 109-111 storefronts have two entries dating to the 1957 remodel, with transoms. There is also a historic entry on the north side of the 111 storefront. Four large storefront windows line the storefront, which is clad in permastone. Originally, each storefront had a central entry flanked by storefront windows. The second and third stories of 109-111 continue to be unified, reflecting the original appearance. The one-over-one-light double-hung wood windows have stone sills and flat stone hoods that are connected at a slightly lower lever between the windows, creating a zig-zag pattern across the building. 113, an older building, was modified at the time 109-111 were built, removing the cornice and brackets and installing the unified cornice. Historically, it was not identified as part of the Fitzgerald Block. The storefront for 113 was modified at a later date than 109-111. The storefront entry is recessed, and it appears that the door is historic. This entry was historically at this location at the right side of the storefront. Large storefront windows provide display space. The bulkhead and storefront frieze has been clad in wood. The upper story windows on 113 have also been modified. The lintels and connected sections have been remodeled, and the second story windows have been decreased in height. The one-over-one-light double-hung wood windows are very slightly recessed, with historic detailed scroll metal lintels. The continuous band from 109-111 is no longer seen.

A unified elaborate metal cornice continues to extend across all three sections of the building. The cornice is decorated with large brackets between each of the sections and at the ends, small brackets, and medallions. The centered pediment is semi-circular with a rectangular top. It has additional decorative details with “Fitzgerald Block” centered on the lower portion. Under these words is the date of “1885.”

The north elevation, which is the 113 building, is brick that has had a cement stucco applied over it. On the first story there is a historic entry with a glass block transom, a window that has been filled with glass block, and another window that has been filled-in with brick and covered with cement. The second story includes three one-over-one-light double-hung windows. The third story has three one-over-one-light double-hung windows. A two-story rear section appears as an addition to the building, though it appears to be as old or possibly older. A one-over-one-light double-hung window is found on the second story of this elevation. The east (rear) elevation has two first story historic entries with glass block in the openings. There is one window with a segmental arch lintel that is covered by wood with an air

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conditioner added. Another window has a segmental arched lintel and has been filled in with brick. There are two smaller windows that have been replaced with modern windows. The second story has five windows with segmental arch lintels that have been covered with wood; the third story has the same. There is a fire-escape running along this elevation. The roof has rolled asphalt.

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Fitzgerald Block appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A, but not under Criteria B and C. It also appears to be a contributing structure to a potential downtown district.

The Fitzgerald Block appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. This building is the site of the first permanent location for the Muscatine Post Office at 111 Iowa from 1887 to 1909. It may also be the last extant building associated with the Muscatine Business College. From 1929 until thru the 1960's, the 109 storefront served as a transportation hub for Muscatine first as an interurban office and then as a bus depot. Additionally, Assembly Hall was used by several labor organizations throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, the incorporation of the older building into this "modern" business block reflects the changing commercial nature and physical appearance of this period. The building does not appear to be eligible under Criteria B. The most prominent person associated with this building was postmaster John Mahin, who was fired by President Cleveland for his Prohibition beliefs. Mr. Mahin is more associated, however, with the *Muscatine Journal* as its long time editor. It also does not appear to be eligible under Criteria C. There are better examples of late Victorian architecture in downtown Muscatine and other blocks retain better integrity.

The Fitzgerald Block also appears to be a contributing building in a potential downtown district. It falls within two historic contexts identified for this historic district: "19<sup>th</sup> century Business and Industry" and "20<sup>th</sup> century Business and Industry." Its early history associated with the post office, Postal Telegraph Company, Bartlett Buggy Company, Assembly Hall, and R.A. Holmes Books reflect the 19<sup>th</sup> century business and community services offered in this building. Its later history associated with a popular restaurant and, interurban railroad, and bus depot reflect the building's 20<sup>th</sup> century contributions to this district. Additionally, the overall architecture as a commercial block contributes architecturally to this potential historic district.

The Fitzgerald Block was built in 1885 by James Fitzgerald at a cost of about \$8,000. The Semi-Centennial Edition of the *Muscatine Journal* in 1891 noted that the building was built of the "finest brick and stone with modern plumbing and steam heating." There was \$3000 worth of furnishings ("Fitzgerald Block," *Semi-Centennial Edition of Muscatine Journal Souvenir Edition*, January 1891, 77). The Fitzgerald Block was built on the site of an older couple of buildings, one of which James Fitzgerald owned a warehouse and wholesale liquor business.

The Fitzgerald Block is divided into three storefronts, with the 111 storefront initially housing James Fitzgerald's Saloon and Warehouse from 1885 to 1887, followed by the Muscatine Post Office from 1887

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to 1909. Originally the people of Muscatine had to go to the tiny hamlet of Geneva to get their mail; as that was the closest post office to Muscatine. The first commissioned postmaster for Muscatine was Edward Fay in 1839. In the years that followed the postmasters read like a who's who in Muscatine, and include Henry Reece, John Mahin (three times!), which included the early years at this location, Benjamin Beach, William Huttig, W.L. Roach, W.S. McKee, and Albert Barry among others. The post office also had a number of locations, with the Fitzgerald Block being the first permanent location ("Muscatine Post Office," May 31, 1940, 86). The Postal Telegraph Company was also located in the 111 storefront from 1887 until 1941.

Above the Post Office (111 storefront), the Muscatine Business College was located here for a short while around 1889-1890. This may be the only extant place where the college was located. The only other known locations for this college (SE corner of Third and Iowa, and the 500 block of East Fifth Street) have been torn down. Another notable business at the 111 address is H.J. Toher's brokerage business. He appears to be the first person to be specifically listed as a broker of stocks and bonds. He is listed at this address between 1899 and 1903. After the post office left in 1909, the Avenue Pool Room opened in the 111 storefront and contractor William Kincaid opened his office at this location, along with the Postal Telegraph Company who continued to operate in this space. The Bartlett Buggy Company was located here between 1911 and leaving before 1916. It was apparently operated by H.M. Bartlett, who also had his law practice here. The Acme Buffett Company joined the crowded 111 storefront in 1916. By 1919, the Pool Room, the contractor, and the buffet company had moved out. At this time the R.I.B. Lilly Beer Parlor joined the Postal Telegraph Company at 111. By 1923 the Postal Telegraph Company was here alone until it left in 1941, at which time this storefront remained empty until the mid-1940's when the Daily News and a postal substation were located here. The building then became vacant again in 1949, with Johnny's Grill here from the late 1950's, until the mid- 1970's.

In the 109 storefront, there was originally the James Fitzgerald Warehouse and Saloon followed by the Post Office in 1887 until 1900 at which time the Post Office is only listed at 111. There were a number of lawyers who were listed at this address, the most significant of these was D.C. Cloud who had an office here from about 1891 to 1894. Mr. Cloud came to Muscatine from Ohio in 1839, a self taught lawyer who passed the Bar exam in 1846. In 1852 he was the first person to serve as Iowa's Attorney General. Mr. Cloud also served in the state legislature. He also wrote a couple of books the most notable of these is "Monopolies and the People" (Richman 1911, Vol. 1: 371). In 1902 the People's Storage Company moved in and lasted until 1913 and the Reliance Loan Company also moved here in 1902 and stayed until about 1924.

By 1900 the Assembly Hall operated on the third story of 109 and 111, along with the Labor Voice, which was a monthly newspaper, but by 1902 the newspaper was already gone. The 1928 Sanborn map specifically notes a "hall" on the third story of 109-111, and it is assumed that this is where they operated beginning in 1900. The 1904 city directory lists several labor organizations that met here, including Barbers, Boxmakers and Sawyers, Carpenters, Cigar Makers, Retail Clerks, Electrical Workers, Electronic Railway Employees, Federal Labor Union, Machinists, Trades and Labor Assembly, Typographical, and Woodworkers. Only six labor organizations did not meet here. By 1921, only three labor organizations did not meet here, with the barbers, cigar makers, I.A.T.S.E., Muscatine Trades and

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Labor Assembly, Musicians, Retail Clerks, Electric Railway Employees, Swichmen's Union, and the carpenters all meeting here. By 1936, only two labor organizations did not meet here. The same labor groups were meeting here as 1921 with the addition of button workers, motion picture and stagehand workers, letter carriers, and the teamsters. The Assembly Hall was located here through 1937 in name, but it continued after this date to act as a union hall, with the more specific unions mentioned starting in 1940 and continuing thru 1952. In 1950, just the button workers and the clothing workers were meeting here. By this time, most labor organizations were meeting at 222 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.

By 1919 the Exide Battery and Ignition Company was located at the 109 storefront with lawyers and the Fidelity Loan Company continuing on the second floor. By 1923 a sewing machine dealer was at this storefront followed by a Chinese laundry being located here by 1927. In 1929, the Clinton, Davenport and Muscatine Interurban Railway was located here. This was a popular way to travel to these cities for those who did not have cars during the hard economic times. It was established in 1912 as the Davenport and Muscatine Railway, with the Depot on West Front Street and the passenger station at the Fisch Building 106-108 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. When the city of Clinton was added to the route in c.1919, the name was changed to the Clinton Davenport and Muscatine Railroad, and the depot was moved to the Welch Apartment Building at 220 Iowa. From 1929 to 1940 the passenger depot was located at this address, and in 1940 it became the Muscatine, Davenport and Clinton Bus line. This bus company was joined by the Bulington Trailways, and the Foster Bus Lines also at this address at this time. Bus companies under various names continued to operate out of here into the 1960's.

The 113 storefront meanwhile was the books and stationary store of R.A. Holmes until 1899 and then a newsstand run by E.E. Davidson from 1900 until about 1921. This was one of several newsstands in Muscatine at this time. The Salvation Army then moved in for a few years, followed by A.M. Cleaners in 1929. This business did not last long, and this storefront became empty during several years early in the Great Depression. In 1936, a barber shop moved in, and since that time this storefront has been dominated by barber/salon businesses.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

"52" Graham, E.L. Collection of Historic Photographs at Musser Public Library. June 1877.

City directories, Muscatine, various publishers, various dates. Available at the Musser Public Library.

Muscatine Journal, Building Permits. December 30, 1957, Section 4, 5.

Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition "Muscatine Post Office", May 31, 1940, 86.

Muscatine Journal Semi-Centennial Edition "Fitzgerald Block", January 1891, 77.

Richman, Irving. *History of Muscatine County, Iowa*. Volume 1. Chicago: S.J. Clarke, 1911.

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

## Location Map



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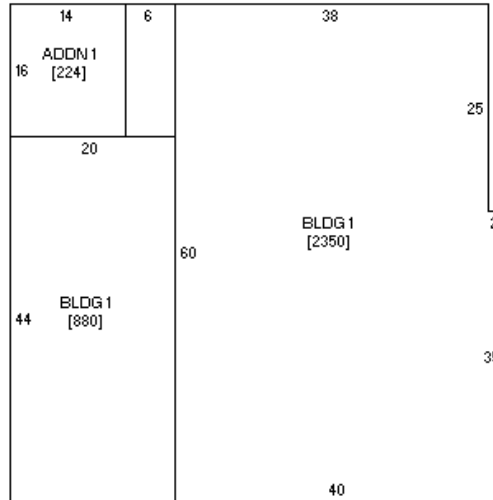
Fitzgerald Block  
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## Plan



(front – Iowa St)

## Photograph of building (digital image)

