

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

State Inventory No. 70-00944 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 Wilson Shoe Store
 other names/site number Field Site #: FS-057

2. Location

street & number 127 E. 2nd 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) 33 Lot(s) W 1/3 of Lot 5

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>	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	Noncontributing _____	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____	objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____	Total
	_____	<u>1</u>	

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/Specialty Store/Shoe Factory& Retail</u>	<u>70: Vacant/Not in Use</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>05B: Late Victorian/Italianate (Original Appearance)</u>	foundation <u>04: Stone</u>
_____	walls <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	roof <u>15C: 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 127 E. 2nd Street Site Number 70-00944
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 1952

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 Glenna Howard, Volunteer/Jim Rudisill, City of Muscatine (R.L. McCarley, Consultant)
organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date February 16, 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: _____

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 3

<u>Wilson Shoe Store</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>127 E. 2nd Street</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Address	City

7. Narrative Description

The one-story structure at 127 E. Second is what remains of a three-story, Italianate building that was constructed as a shoe factory and retail shop by William Stewart and his son Theodore in 1854. The top two floors of the structure were razed in 1952 when an adjoining building to the west was demolished. The building continued to house a shoe store at this time, descended from the original 1854 store. The alterations included installation of metal cladding over the remaining upper facade, installation of a permanent metal lattice/cloth awning, and reconfiguration of the storefront. A 1952 newspaper advertisement showed the current storefront, indicating the demolition work and storefront alterations were completed prior to the ad date ("Wilson's," December 30, 1952, sec. 5, p. 10).

The current appearance of the building reflects this 1952 period of remodeling. The original glass door entry is recessed within a wide entry area. Storefront windows are found to the left of the entry, along each side of the recessed area, and at each side of the front of the storefront. These windows are plate glass units, smaller than the original windows, which also forced taller bulkheads to be created. Areas between the windows, the bulkheads and other areas were covered with plaster and painted. The permanent metal lattice/cloth awning extends across the façade. Vertical metal cladding extends over the remaining portion of the upper stories, and "Wilson's. The Shoe Store" is on this façade in black lettering.

Historic photos show its original appearance as an attractive brick structure with a conspicuous cornice supported by five brackets. A belt course or corbelling appears to run across the width of the building between the brackets and the top of the full-height third story windows. These windows appear to be one-over-one-light, double-hung units with rounded tops and heavy "u-shaped" hoodmolds. The third floor windowsills appear to be smooth cut stone that project out from the rest of the building. The projecting sills of the third-story windows match the window hoods of the second floor windows. These units appear to be the same size as the third floor windows, but are three-over-one, double-hung windows. They are not rounded. However a full-width balcony with a wrought iron balustrade extends out from the windows. The original storefront includes a recessed entryway surrounded by full-height storefront windows that are supported by a relatively short bulkhead. The door of the entryway appears to be a wood unit with a glass insert. "Wilson's" is printed on the door just below the insert. A retractable, canvas roll awning can be seen in various photos in either its extended or rolled up condition across the front of the store. There appears to be a solid door on the far east edge of the storefront. This entrance probably provided outside access to the top floors. A member of the Wilson Shoes firm constructed a six-foot model of the original store, including the storefront design as it appeared in 1854. In a newspaper advertisement, the public was invited to view the display, which was also shown in the ad, during an open house of the store in 1940 (Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition 1940, 5 (Section 2)).

Most of the interior has been renovated, with a suspended ceiling below the tin ceiling and carpeting over the wood floor. The wood shelving that ran along the walls is still present, but other interior, historic features are not apparent.

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 4

<u>Wilson Shoe Store</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>127 E. 2nd Street</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Wilson Shoe Store does not appear individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, and C. However, it does appear to be a contributing building in a potential downtown historic district.

Modifications made to the building were completed during or just prior to 1952. While these alterations would be considered historic within the 50-year threshold, most of the building's individual historic significance occurred prior to the alterations. There is little significance attached to the building since its alterations, other than as an ongoing family business in Muscatine. While the Wilson Shoe Store did continue to operate here after this remodeling through 2004, its formative history as an early shoe store in Muscatine and as a growing, sustained business is not reflected in this appearance. Thus, the Wilson Shoe Store does not appear to be individually eligible under Criterion A, B, or C.

Since the exterior modifications to the Wilson Shop Store were completed by December 1952 and therefore can be considered historic alterations, it does appear that the building is contributing building in a potential downtown historic district. The building appears to fall primarily within one historic contexts identified for the district: "20th Century Business and Industry," as the current appearance does not truly reflect either "Early Settlement" or "19th century Business and Industry" though its history dates to this period. The store has been located at the same site since 1854, and until late in 2004, had continually been operating as a shoe store. The modifications, including the removal of top two stories and exterior remodeling, took place at a time that the block was going through a rebirth with the construction of the adjacent new Woolworth's building. The demolition of this adjacent building required the demolition of the upper two stories of this building as the shared wall was dovetailed together. The alterations permitted the same family store to update to meet "modern" needs and appearances.

Since the original opening in 1854, the store has remained in the same location, with only one family change of ownership in its 150 years of shoe business until the store closed in December 2004. William Stewart and his son Theodore moved to Muscatine, Iowa in 1854 from Marietta, Ohio. They constructed the building at 127 2nd Street specifically for the production and retail sales of boots and shoes. The Stewarts were not the first shoe store/manufacturer in the community. At least three different shops were operating in 1846 (Newhall 1846: 82). In 1859, nine stores were operating in the community (Muscatine City Directory 1859: 86). The number of shoe shops and manufacturers continued to climb until 1877-78 when over 20 shoe businesses were in the city.

John C. Wilson, a 19-year-old Irish immigrant, arrived in Muscatine and began working for the Stewarts in 1873. Around 1890 Wilson and his brother-in-law Tom Cherry purchased the property and operated the store as Wilson and Cherry Shoes (Richman 1911: 35-37). In 1901 John C. Wilson bought out Cherry and re-named the business the Wilson Shoe Store. John C. Wilson died in 1914 and his two sons Tom and Bob formed a new partnership. This lasted until Tom's death in 1943, when Tom's widow Genevieve became Bob's new partner. Sometime after the turn of the 20th century, the store stopped producing its own shoes and began purchasing from other manufacturers. During this period, over

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 5

<u>Wilson Shoe Store</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
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<u>127 E. 2nd Street</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
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22,000 pairs of shoes were stocked on the long, narrow shelves in the store (“It’s so long, with a shoe horn and smile,” November 14, 2004, A2). Upon Genevieve’s death in 1953, two of her children, Richard and Isabel, became partners with their uncle Bob. At about the same time, the building was remodeled, spurred by the demolition of the adjacent building. The Woolworth Company wanted to tear down an adjacent building to construct a new store. However, the two buildings were dovetailed together and one could not come down without the other. The Wilsons agreed to cut off the top two floors of their building to accommodate Woolworth’s plans (“Business is step ahead of the rest,” August 7, 2004, C1.).

Bob’s son William later became a partner as well, with his cousins Richard and Isabel. When Richard retired in 1978, William’s son-in-law Jim White purchased his interest in the store and assumed the duties and responsibilities of manager while replacing William in the partnership. Even though Richard was retired, he continued to work in the store for another 26 years as a part-time shoe repairman. The business was described as the "oldest shoe store in Iowa" in 1984 (Carlson 1984: 62).

The deaths of Robert in 1985 and Isabel in 2002 resulted in the partnership being restructured, with Jim and his wife Nancy (Wilson) as general partners and William and his wife Barb as limited partners. The tradition ended 150 years after it began when Jim White and other family members agreed to close the store in December 2004. While part of the decision was economical - good leather shoes have been replaced by sneakers and other “soft” shoes – mostly it was the family just deciding to get out of the shoe business. During this period of continuous operation, the same family operated the business for over 100 years. Five generations of the Wilson family, starting with John in 1890, worked in the store. At one time, 16 members of the family were working there (“It’s so long, with a shoe horn and smile,” November 14, 2004, A2).

The building is currently vacant.

9. Major Bibliographical References

“Business is step ahead of the rest,” *Muscatine Journal*, August 7, 2004, C1.

Carlson, Jon. *Muscatine: A Pictorial History*, Muscatine, IA: Quest Publishing, 1984, 62.

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Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 6

<u>Wilson Shoe Store</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>127 E. 2nd Street</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Address	City

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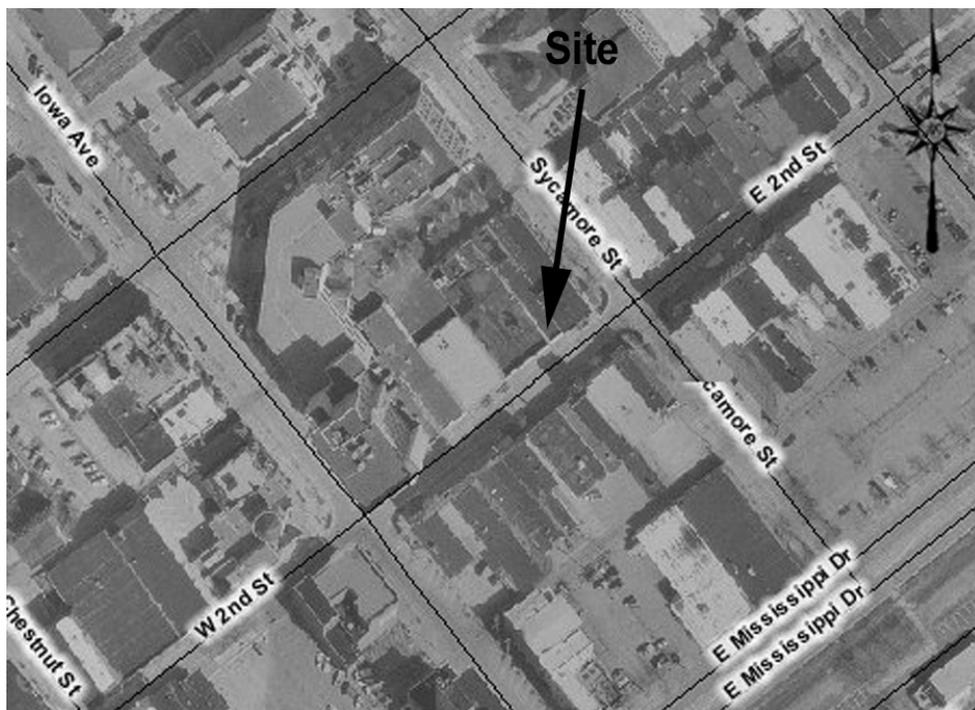
"Stewert's," Advertisement in *Muscatine Tri-Weekly Journal*, November 27, 1854, page 2.

White, Jim. Last store owner and Wilson family member. Interview by Glenna Howard, July 2004, Muscatine, IA.

"Wilson's," Advertisement in *Muscatine Journal Year-end Review*, December 30, 1952, Section 5, Page 10.

"Wilson's," Advertisement in *Muscatine Journal Centennial Edition*, May 31, 1940, Section 2, Page 5.

Location Map



Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 7

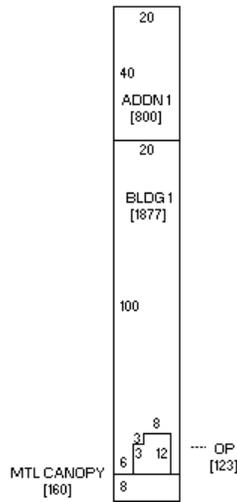
Wilson Shoe Store
Name of Property

Muscatine
County

127 E. 2nd Street
Address

Muscatine
City

Plan (from assessor's office)



(front – 2nd St)

Photograph of building (digital image)

