

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

State Inventory No. 70-00126  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 Commercial Building  
 other names/site number Field Site #: FS-072

**2. Location**

street & number 207-209 East 2<sup>nd</sup> 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) 32 Lot(s) 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**

| Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) | Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>02E: Commerce/Specialty Store - 207</u>              | <u>02E: Commerce/Specialty Store - 207</u>             |
| <u>02E03: Commerce/Dry Goods - 209</u>                  | <u>02E07: Photographer - 209</u>                       |

**7. Description**

| Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) | Materials (Enter categories from instructions) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <u>05B: Late Victorian / Italianate</u>                           | foundation <u>03: Brick</u>                    |
|                                                                   | walls <u>03: Brick</u>                         |
|                                                                   | roof <u>08B: Rolled Asphalt</u>                |
|                                                                   | other <u>12: Ceramic Tile- 209 storefront?</u> |

**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 207-209 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

Site Number 70-00126  
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 1860  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 Devin Pettit Vice-Chairman M.H.P.C. (R.L. McCarley, consultant)  
organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date February 14, 2005  
street & number 215 Sycamore 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: \_\_\_\_\_

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

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|                                                      |                            |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <u>Commercial Building</u><br>Name of Property       | <u>Muscatine</u><br>County |
| <u>207-209 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street</u><br>Address | <u>Muscatine</u><br>City   |

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## 7. Narrative Description

The building at 207-209 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street is a three story, two section, brick commercial building. Each section is three bays in width. Pilasters frame the building and divide the sections. The 207 (left) storefront has been altered with new brick and windows. The 209 (right) storefront has a historic but probably not original storefront. The floor of the recessed entry is tiled. On the second story, the windows have flat decorative hoods with brackets, and the third story windows are arched with hoods and brackets. Most of the sills have small brackets as well, with the exception of the second story of 209. All the window sashes have been replaced with non-historic, generally smaller, sashes. The cornice and parapet have brick dentils. The original cornice with brackets has been removed as shown in photos from July 4, 1888, and circa 1910 (#178, Graham photograph; OG59A, Grossheim photograph). The roof has rolled asphalt.

The north (rear) elevation has a one-story garage and or storage area that extends to the alleyway. This one story addition is apparently the addition made to 207 in the 1880's (Sanborn), to house the pianos at Schmidt and Company. The second story on the original building includes two windows that have one-over-one-light double-hung sashes and segmental arch lintels. The second story also has an entry with segmental arch lintels. The third story includes two windows that have one-over-one-light double-hung sashes and segmental arch lintels.

At 209, the north elevation includes a one-story section of the original building that extends back to the alley. Like 207 this serves as either a garage and or storage area. There is a modern entry with segmented arched lintels. On the three-story north elevation, there is metal cladding hiding the original brick. The third story includes two modern windows that have one-over-one-light double-hung sashes. There is also a modern entry.

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The building at 207-209 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street does not appear individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, or C. It does, however, appear to be a contributing building in a potential downtown commercial district.

The building does not appear individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, or C. Though G. Schmidt & Brother (bookbinder and musical instrument dealer), the Silverman Brothers, and then S&L Cohn Clothiers operated here for several decades, they do not appear to be particularly prominent businesses. Norman Baker was associated with this building for a few years, but there are other buildings in the downtown that he was more strongly associated with, particularly Baker Hospital #2 at 408 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Additionally, with the storefront remodeling, replacement windows, and removed cornice, the integrity of the building from this period has been impacted. The building at 207-209 East Second Street is one of many brick, Italianate structures in the downtown, and there are better examples of this style, particularly with these alterations.

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| <u>Commercial Building</u>                | <u>Muscatine</u> |
| Name of Property                          | County           |
| <u>207-209 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street</u> | <u>Muscatine</u> |
| Address                                   | City             |

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There is however sufficient integrity, along with its extensive commercial history, to make it a contributing structure in a potential downtown commercial district. The overall three-story brick construction reflects the historic scale and materials of buildings within the downtown. Additionally, the window hoods continue to reflect the Italianate design. The building contributes to two key contexts identified for the district: “19<sup>th</sup> century Business and Industry” and “20<sup>th</sup> century Business and Industry.” The businesses that operated from this building contribute significantly to the local business environment and economy.

This building was built by 1860, according to the Muscatine Journal Industrial edition of July 17, 1902. The first business listed by a city directory as being in this building was Silverman and Brothers Clothing, which was in the 209 bay of the building in 1866. No directories exist for the early 1860s, and the 1902 article notes that Sam Cohn came to work for the Silverman Brothers at this location in 1860. His brother Louis came to town in 1862, and joined his brother at Silverman and Brother. In 1866 Sam Cohn was given an interest in the Silverman and Brother business. In 1868 Sam Cohn started his own business down the street, and was so successful that he was able to buy out Silverman and Brother in 1871. He continued his business in the earlier building. The business was renamed S & L Cohn, and remained at least until 1916; the last year it is mentioned in the city directory (Carlson 1997: “S.L. Cohn Clothiers,” 35).

The first known business in the 207 storefront was Schmidt and Brother, which was founded by G. Schmidt in 1862, after being wounded in the Civil War. His brother Herman joined him at the end of the war. In November 1901 G. Schmidt sold his interest to Herman Schmidt’s son. At that time the name changed to H. Schmidt and Son. The store started out selling books and office supplies, and later added musical instruments (Carlson 1997: “H. Schmidt & Son,” 23). According to city directories the name changed again in 1913 to the Schmidt Music Company. By 1919, the Schmidt Music Company had moved into the 209 storefront from 207.

The 1883 Sanborn shows the 209 bay of the building extending back to the alleyway. The 207 bay extended back only about two-thirds of the way back to the alley. By the 1888 Sanborn, a two-story addition to 207 had occurred, taking the building nearly back to the alley. This addition was made to store pianos and other musical instruments for the expanded business of G. Schmidt and Brother. By the 1899 Sanborn, the pianos and other musical instruments had moved to the front of the store, with the bookbinding (original business), moving to the back. The 1905 Sanborn shows both pianos and stationary up front, with nothing listed toward the back. The 1919 Sanborn shows the music store had moved to 209, with the clothing store having moved out and a restaurant having moved into 207.

In the 1920s, new businesses moved into both storefronts. The 1921 city directory lists the George Washington Café in the 207 storefront. By 1927 this café was bought out by Norman Baker; the café then became known as the KTNT Café named after his radio station. Norman Baker was an interesting, prominent local entrepreneur, controversial for promoting his “cure” for cancer that brought many people to Muscatine in the 1930s. After working in entertainment and on several inventions, he formed the Tangle Company in Muscatine to manufacture air-powered calliopes, among other products. He also opened an art school and in 1925 formed a radio station, KTNT (Know The Naked Truth). He used the

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| <u>Commercial Building</u>                | <u>Muscatine</u> |
| Name of Property                          | County           |
| <u>207-209 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street</u> | <u>Muscatine</u> |
| Address                                   | City             |

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radio as a forum to preach against a wide-ranging list of individuals and organizations he considered enemies, as well as promoting his “cancer cure” and other products. In order to capture some of the profits from all of the people he was bringing to town, he bought up a gas station and this particular café. In both cases he cut prices at these establishments to undercut that of his competitors (Winston 1936: 93). Mr. Baker was known to sit at the window of his café drinking coffee. In fact he seemed to get so wrapped up in this activity, that on the day of his nephew’s funeral the family had to call down to the café to remind him of the funeral (Drum 2000: 83). By 1931, Norman Baker had sold out to the Statler Café.

By 1923 according to city directories, the Cozy Confectionary had moved into the 209 storefront. J.C. Penney Company opened a store here on August 15, 1924, and then moved to the Laurel Building by 1931 (“Year in Review,” 1925: 5). The 209 storefront was then vacant for a number of years until the National Food Store established the National Tea Company in the fall of 1937. This store carried a full line of groceries, and featured Come Again and Hazel Brand Labeled products. The National Food Store sponsored a radio program “Cartune-O-Musical” quiz show, which aired on WGN radio (“National Food Store” 1940, p. 193). This store lasted through the 1940s.

In the 1930s, the 207 storefront was primarily used as a clothing store. In later years it was used as a bakery, and later still a computer store, which it is today. In the 1950s, a photography studio moved into the 109 storefront, which continues to this day.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

“#59A,” Parade, c.1910. Grossheim Photography Collection, Musser Public Library.

“#178,” 1888. Volume 4, E.L. Graham Collection. Prepared for the P.M. Musser Public Library by E.L. Graham in 1908-1910 historic photographs with captions by, not photographed by, E.L. Graham.

Carlson, Jo Ann, ed. *Brief Histories of Muscatine Business from Muscatine Journal – July 17, 1902*. Muscatine: Musser Public Library, 1997.

City Directories, Muscatine. Various Publishers, 1856-1949. Available at Musser Public Library.

“Day by Day Review of the Year,” Year end edition for 1924, *Muscatine Journal*, January 1, 1925, p. 5.

Drum, Jan. *Muscatine Story Gathering 2000*. Various writers, Muscatine, 2000.

“National Food Store,” *Muscatine Journal: Centennial Edition*, May 31, 1940, p. 193.

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)

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Commercial Building  
Name of Property

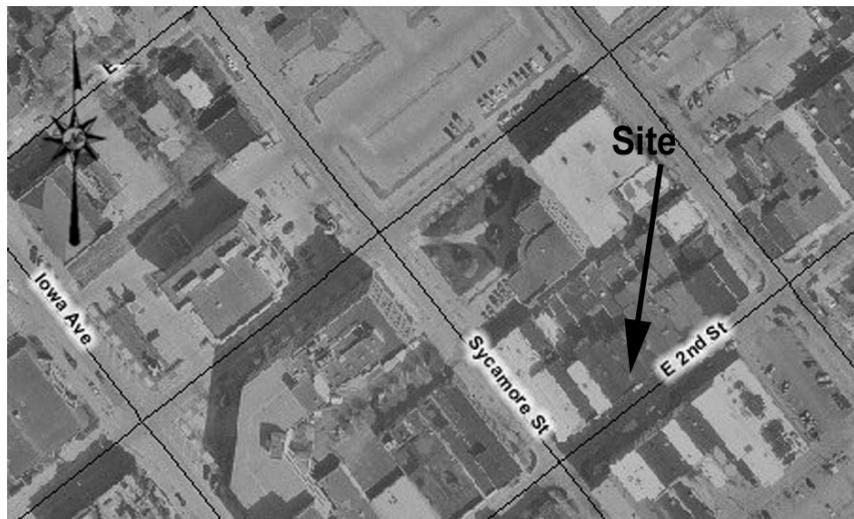
Muscatine  
County

207-209 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Address

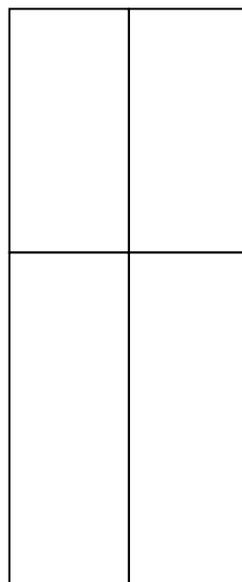
Muscatine  
City

Winston, Alvin. *Doctors, Dynamiters and Gunmen: The Life Story of Norman Baker*. Muscatine: TNT Press, 1936.

## Location Map



## Plan (from assessor's office)



(front – 2<sup>nd</sup> St)

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Commercial Building  
Name of Property

Muscatine  
County

207-209 East 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Address

Muscatine  
City

## Photograph of building (digital image)

