

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

State Inventory No. 70-00133  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 Eaton Knitting Factory  
 other names/site number Field Site #: FS-075

**2. Location**

street & number 215 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> St  
 city or town Muscatine, Iowa  vicinity, county \_\_\_\_\_  
 Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name \_\_\_\_\_ Township No. \_\_\_\_\_ Range No. \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter of Quarter \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If Urban) Subdivision \_\_\_\_\_ Original Town \_\_\_\_\_ Block(s) 32 Lot(s) 3 E 1/3 of E 2/3

**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 Enter number of:	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
	_____	Contributing <u>1</u>	
	_____	Noncontributing _____	
	_____	_____	
	_____	_____	
	_____	_____	

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>02G: Commerce / Restaurant</u>	<u>02E: Commerce / Specialty Store – Greeting Cards</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

**7. Description**

<b>Architectural Classification</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>05G: Victorian / Romanesque</u>	foundation _____
_____	walls <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	roof <u>08B: Asphalt Rolled</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 215 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> St Site Number 70-00133  
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 1875  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 Jay Brady, Chair (R.L. McCarley, Consultant)  
organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date June 6, 2006  
street & number 215 Sycamore telephone 563-264-1554  
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>Eaton Knitting Factory</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>215 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

## 7. Narrative Description

This building is a c.1875 three story, Romanesque Revival brick commercial building. Review of the 1869-70 Graham Collection photo of this block shows this building is not present (GR22, Vol 1, 1869). Two Graham Collection photos from 1879 show this three story building present comparable to the building that is present today (GR160, GR164, Vol 4, 1879). An 1888 photo shows the building front similar to the present (GR165, Vol 4, 1888). A 1900 photograph shows the building front much like it is today (OG #A-107, Vol 27, 1900).

The original storefront has been replaced, but the three-bay second and third stories are relatively intact. Brick pilasters at each side of the front elevation frame the building. The storefront has been remodeled with a modern glass center entry door, plate glass windows, and non-historic upper entry door on the west (left) side of the storefront. The entry doors to the retail store and the upper floors are typical glass retail doors with transom above. A metal awning is suspended from the wall by three steel rods, and metal clads the remainder of the storefront frieze about the awning. The three second-story windows have non-historic single-over-single-light double-hung sashes and segmental arch brick lintels with center stone keystones. The window sills appear to be stone. The three third floor non-historic single-over-single-light double-hung windows are arch windows with stone hoods with a center keystone detail. The window sills appear to be stone as well. The roof cornice is brick with arches and corbelling similar to adjacent 217 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. The east and west elevations are party walls with the adjacent buildings. The original three-story building rear elevation is brick with a third story entry and two brick arch windows. The two-story structure fronting the alley is brick.

A one story addition, adjoining three story addition, and adjoining two-story structure was added to the rear of this building between 1892 and 1899 according to the Sanborn Maps. The 1905 Sanborn indicates the back complex of building additions was again modified to convert the single story section to two stories and reduce a portion of the three story back addition to two stories to match the one story conversion. By 1923, the Sanborn maps show that the two and three story additions had been reconfigured to reflect the earlier 1899 configuration of original three story front building followed by a small one story back addition, a three story middle section, and a two story attached structure fronting the alley. The three story middle section has since been replaced with a one story middle section.

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

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

While the building has seen several different commercial business types in its history including one of the early stores of Leu's Ice Cream, none of these businesses were particularly prominent within the commercial history of Muscatine during their tenure in this building. Leu's Ice Cream is more strongly associated with the building at 312-314 Sycamore Street, built for the business in 1922. With additional

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contextual research on the early ice cream industry in Muscatine, this building may be eligible under Criterion A within this context. Additionally, no prominent persons are associated with this building, and the building's architectural elements are relatively common in downtown Muscatine.

However, the building appears to be a contributing structure in a potential downtown commercial historic district, both for its overall commercial history, and for its Romanesque Revival architectural style. It falls within two historic contexts identified for this district: "19<sup>th</sup> century Business and Industry" and "20<sup>th</sup> century Business and Industry." Several businesses were located in this building in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which contributed to the commercial enterprise of downtown Muscatine. Additionally, it was associated with the Leu family ice cream business as their second store in Muscatine, a prominent business that would move from this location to their new ice cream factory. The building is a good example of a late 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian commercial building. The building is located in the middle of a key block centered in the business district.

The earliest discovered use of this location was the James A. Eaton knitting factory (ns of 2<sup>nd</sup> 8 w of Cedar) as listed in the 1877-78 City Directory. J. A. Eaton was born on September 21, 1833 in Marion county, Indiana, married Mary E. Davis on February 2, 1854, and moved to a farm near Pleasant Prairie, Iowa in 1857. In 1872 he moved his family to Muscatine where he served in a number of public offices including sheriff of Muscatine county for two terms beginning in 1876 and city marshal for one year in 1878. He previously served two terms a county supervisor from Fulton township during the civil war years. He was at one time captain of the ferry boat providing service between Iowa and Illinois prior to the high bridge construction ("Injury Proves Fatal to Pioneer Local Resident," Jan. 6, 1921).

By 1883 a dry goods business was located here according to the 1883 Sanborn. This business was likely Comet and Issac Notions and Fancy Goods store, which was listed here in the 1886 city directory. Kirsch and Casper Painters and Hangers were also located here in 1886 to around 1892, according to the city directories and the 1888 and 1892 Sanborn maps. The 1892 Sanborn is in conflict with the 1891-92 City directory that lists Fred Leu ice cream and confectionary.

Fred Leu had been in the ice cream business in Philadelphia and Rock Island prior to coming to Muscatine and establishing his store in 1881. The business was first located at 115 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> and then moved to 215 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> around 1890, where ice cream and confectionary operations would continue for 31 years until 1921. From 1897 to 1899, Fred Leu, Jr., son of Fred Leu, operated a restaurant and confectionary also at 205 W. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. During this period (1897-1899) Fred Leu (father) was operating his ice cream and confectionary business at 215 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> St. (City Directories). Fred Leu retired in 1904 and his sons, Harry and Rob, took the business over. Leu and Sons' draw extended throughout the community because it also provided home delivery of its products, which in a 1915 Muscatine Journal ad was claimed to be "fit for a king" (Fred Leu advertisement, *Journal* 1915). Throughout this period, the upper stories of this building have been used for tenant housing with the Leu's living here from the late 1890s to 1923 ("Leu & Son Ice Cream Manufacturers," 1940; City Directories).

Ice cream shops were an important social gathering spot for families and young people in the latter portion of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup>. Many of these manufactured their own ice cream.

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<u>Eaton Knitting Factory</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
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Almost half-dozen of the shops were operating in the 1880s when Fred Leu started his business. The high point for these shops was in the early 1900s, when as many as a dozen shops and local manufacturers were treating Muscatine's sweet tooth. This building represents the second location for the Fred Leu ice cream and restaurant operation and is the last location where the founder, Fred Leu, worked prior to his retirement in 1904. This location was used by the elder Leu for the longest period of time as he established the Leu name and its association with ice cream in the Muscatine community. The building illustrates the smaller shop associated with hand made ice cream retail at the turn of the century prior to the establishment of the larger local commercial and family ice cream factories, such as Leu's later Sycamore location, that were established as industrialization entered this food sector. With additional research on this aspect of the ice cream business, a case for individual significance under Criterion A for its association with the early ice cream industry may be made.

The Leu family continued to operate an ice cream wholesale and retail business in the community for nearly 75 years. A new building was built on Sycamore Street to house Leu and Sons in 1922. In 1935, Harry Leu established the Chrome Room in conjunction with his retail and wholesale ice cream business. Leu and Sons was described in the 1899 Muscatine County Atlas Landowners publication as a leading Muscatine business, though neither its founder or his sons appeared to be prominent in the community ("Leu & Son Ice Cream Manufacturers," 1940). While this is a significant business in Muscatine, the new building built specifically for this business on Sycamore Street is more strongly associated with the prominence of this business. Additionally, this building retains more historic features from the period that Leu and Sons operated, including ice cream machinery in the basement.

The Tip Top confectionary/café started operation by Ed Brookhart in 1923 at this location (Centennial Edition, Muscatine Journal 1940) and continued until 1949. Ed Brookhart lived here from 1927 to 1939, continuing the tradition in this building of the owner/operator living above the storefront.

The building saw several uses in the 1950s including Earl May Seed in 1952, vacant in 1954, The Boat Shop 1956-1958, and Schmidts Sporting Goods in 1959.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

City Directories, Muscatine, Various publishers, 1869-1959. Available at the Musser Public Library.

Fred Leu advertisement. Muscatine Journal. Muscatine, IA: Muscatine Journal, July 14, 1915.

"Injury Proves Fatal to Pioneer Local Resident," *Muscatine Journal*, January 6, 1921, Pg 7.

"Leu & Son Ice Cream Manufacturers," Centennial Edition, Muscatine Journal newspaper, Muscatine, Iowa, May 31, 1940, Section 2, Pg 6. Available at the Musser Public Library.

Second West from Cedar Photograph, 1869, GR22 of 977.7 Graham Photo Collection, Volume 1. Available at the Musser Public Library.

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Second West from Cedar Photograph, 1879, GR160 of 977.7 Graham Photo Collection, Volume 4. Available at the Musser Public Library.

Second East from Sycamore Photograph, 1879, GR164 of 977.7 Graham Photo Collection, Volume 4. Available at the Musser Public Library.

Second East from Sycamore Photograph, 1888, GR165 of 977.7 Graham Photo Collection, Volume 4. Available at the Musser Public Library.

OG #A-42, 2<sup>nd</sup> St at Cedar looking West, C 1906, Grossheim Photo Collection. Available at the Musser Public Library.

OG #A-107, Vol 27, Street Fair, September 10-15, 1900, Grossheim Photo Collection. Available at the Musser Public Library.

Sanborn Map Company. "Muscatine, Iowa," Sanborn fire insurance maps. Pelham, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 1883, 1888, 1892, 1899, 1907, 1912, 1919, 1928, 1946. Accessed online at: [sanborn.umi.com](http://sanborn.umi.com).

Second Street Muscatine, Randallman's Post Card Collection, 1907. Available at the Musser Public Library.

Second West from Cedar Photograph, 1869, GR22 of 977.7 Graham Photo Collection, Volume 1. Available at the Musser Public Library.

## Location Map



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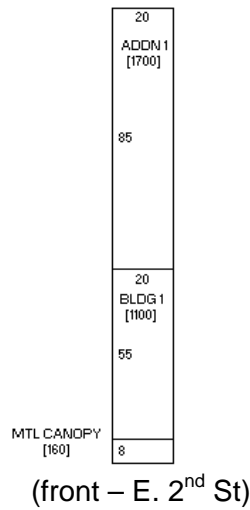
Eaton Knitting Factory  
Name of Property

Muscatine  
County

215 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Address

Muscatine  
City

## Plan (from assessor's office)



## Photograph of building (digital image)

