

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

State Inventory No. 70-00196  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 Courthouse Square District  
 other names/site number Field Site #: FS-123

**2. Location**

street & number 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> & Mulberry/Walnut 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) 59 Lot(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**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:	
Enter number of:	Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	_____	_____	_____ buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____	_____ objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____	_____ Total
	_____	_____	_____ 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 and Architectural Survey and Evaluation of the Downtown Commercial District Historical Architectural Data Base Number 70-013

**6. Function or Use**

<b>Historic Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Current Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>13C01: Landscape/Plaza/Square</u>	<u>13C01: Landscape/Plaza/Square</u>
<u>08H: Monument</u>	<u>08H: Monument</u>

**7. Description**

<b>Architectural Classification</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
_____	foundation _____
_____	walls _____
_____	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 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> St. & Mulberry/Walnut

Site Number 70-00196  
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

**Significant Dates**

*Construction date*  
1839  check if circa or estimated date

*Other dates*  
1875, 1908-09

**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 Jim Rudisill, Planning & Community Development Coordinator (R.L. McCarley, Consultant)

organization City of Muscatine date January 31, 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

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<u>Courthouse Square</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> St. &amp; Mulberry/Walnut</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Address	City

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## 7. Narrative Description

When the town of Muscatine was platted, one entire block on a small knob of elevated ground in the east end of the community was reserved as a public square. This square continues to exist as the Courthouse Square, with the 1908 courthouse centrally located on the grassy site. A number of large and small trees dot the courthouse square. Additional landscape features include bushes immediately around the courthouse. Newer park benches have also been placed throughout the area.

Approximately ten-foot-wide cement sidewalks now enclose the square, as well as a low concrete retaining wall. Additional sidewalks enter diagonally from each corner to the courthouse and enter perpendicularly to 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Streets in the middle of the block straight to the courthouse. A set of four concrete steps at each corner provides access to the diagonal walks. On the square's south and north elevations, seven-foot-wide walks swing in a gentle arch from one corner of the square to the opposite corner. The walks provide pedestrian access to the courthouse's main entrances on each of those elevations. Twelve-foot-wide sidewalks also run directly from the perimeter walkway on the north and south sides to the main entrances. Narrower sidewalks run adjacent to the courthouse on its west and east elevations and connect the two arched sidewalk sections near the tops of their arches. Short, curved sections of cement walkway split off from these connecting walks and join the arched walks higher up the arch. This creates small triangular pieces of ground near each corner of the courthouse that are surrounded by cement walks. Three of the corner pieces have small shrubs or other vegetation, but the southwest triangle contains a flat, circular stone setting on a three-foot-tall cement pedestal. The stone might have formed a base for some type of sculpture or other artwork, but no documentation was located that identifies what might have set on the stone.

Though the current walk layout likely dates to the 1908-09 construction of the current courthouse, historically the walks followed a similar pattern on the square. An 1857 map of Muscatine depicts the older courthouse located behind the current site, closer to 4<sup>th</sup> Street though somewhat centered on the square. Walks extended to the center diagonally from each corner. Additional straight perpendicular walks entered from the middle of the block on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street as well as Mulberry and Walnut. A larger (wider drive) area extended from the middle of the block on 4<sup>th</sup> Street into the rear of the courthouse (Bailey 1857).

Other features present on the courthouse square include a Civil War Memorial that was dedicated on July 4, 1875. It is located to the southwest of the courthouse. It was rededicated 50 years later on July 4, 1925. The structure is a fluted marble column on which a Union infantryman stands atop, keeping a watchful gaze towards the south. The column rests on a granite pedestal, on which are identified the names of local citizens who died in the conflict. Two Civil War-era cannon barrels, resting on concrete supports on each side of the soldier's monument, also point south, while stacked cannon balls set between the two cannons. A flagpole is located to the monument's right.

A second military monument is located to the east of the Civil War marker, to the southeast of the courthouse. This is a simpler stone and metal marker inscribed as the Muscatine County All Veterans

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Memorial. It was dedicated on May 28, 1998. A single, Civil War-era, wheeled carriage cannon sets in front of this monument.

According to a 1976 Iowa State Inventory form, a time capsule is also located on the square, although the form does not describe its physical location. It was buried in 1976, with plans to re-open it in 2076.

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Muscatine County Courthouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981 as part of the "County Courthouses in Iowa" Multiple Property nomination. A review of a 1976 Iowa State Inventory Form for the courthouse, which apparently was used for its National Register nomination, does not mention the square, nor does it include a specific boundary for the listing. Thus, it is assumed that the greater courthouse square was not included in the nomination.

Although the courthouse square may not have been included in the boundary of the original listing, it appears to be eligible as a contributing feature/district of a listed site. The square shares with the county courthouse a strong identification with the Civic Pride and Accomplishment historic context, developed due to the construction of the courthouse. It is apparent from the arrangement of the various elements that architect J.E. Mills wanted this focus to extend to both the building and the surrounding grounds. He created a single design that placed the building at the center of the small knoll, then installed walkways and landscaping to highlight that centerpiece. His overall effort appears to have focused on maintaining the community's pride in its public buildings and demonstrating to visitors that pride and sense of accomplishment. If revisions to the courthouse nomination are considered, a specific boundary should be determined for the property. It may be appropriate to include the entire courthouse square as part of this boundary, or revise the nomination as a courthouse square district nomination to include a minimum of the courthouse, square, landscape elements, and monuments. The 1909 jail and the neighboring old jail, with the power plant for the new courthouse, should also be considered as potential contributing building in a broader Courthouse District.

A broader Courthouse District nomination could include the elements located on the square (landscape, monuments), courthouse, 1909 jail, and old jail. This nomination would include the early designation and 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the square, construction of the old jail adjacent to the square, erection of monuments on the square in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and construction of the 1908-09 new courthouse and jail. As the primary site for public building construction in the early days of the community, the courthouse square became a focal point of government and civic activities. Not only did this become the place to erect the public structures that local residents would need to conduct daily business, but it also became the site of community pride and aspirations in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Three buildings, a monument, and several landscape features continue to reflect this history.

The square might also be a contributing site in a potential downtown historic district. It strongly falls within one historic context identified for the district: "Civic Pride and Accomplishment." Whether or not the courthouse will be within the district depends on the final boundary for the district. While it is not

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within the recommended boundary of the core district, but it is within a potential “governmental” expansion section, which includes the courthouse, square, old jail, and new 1909 jail.

The plat for the original town of Muscatine included the present square before any civic building was actually constructed. The elevated lot and a corresponding square in the east end of the original town are clearly identified in the community's early maps and help establish the goals and objectives of Muscatine's founders and civic leaders. County auditor A.S. Lawrence wrote a short history of the square after the current county courthouse was constructed. That account was later republished in a 1911 Muscatine County history. In his description, Lawrence explained Court House Square was part of a land grant from the general government that included section 35. Money used for the construction of the first courthouse and jail was obtained from proceeds collected from the sale of a portion of section 35, meaning county residents did not incur any cost from the construction of the original county buildings (Richman 1911: 96-102).

The jail was apparently the first building constructed on the square. It was a 24' x 16' wood structure that was built in the northwest corner of the square in 1839. The jail was replaced with a new brick structure in 1856 across 4<sup>th</sup> Street from the square (Richman 1911: 96-102). This jail continues to stand and has been individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places (70-00246). With this nearby construction, the connection of the courthouse square to the adjacent block began.

The county courthouse was constructed after the original jail from plans developed by Stephen B. Brophy. This structure was 50' x 60' and apparently was completed sometime in 1841. According to Sanborn maps, the building was located to the north of the current courthouse. A fire on December 17, 1864 practically destroyed the building, which was rebuilt in 1865. At the same time, a 20' x 70' addition was added following voter approval of the proposal (Richman 1911: 96-102).

Two primary monuments stand on the courthouse grounds to honor the military service of personnel from Muscatine. The oldest monument, which was dedicated on July 3, 1875, recognizes Civil War veterans. It took Muscatine nearly a decade before it was able to acknowledge its Civil War soldiers with a special monument dedicated to them. An association had formed in September 1867, and by 1874 it had raised around \$700 towards the expense of the monument. W.W. Webster, a Civil War veteran himself, who operated a marble works at the northeast corner of Second and Walnut Street, spearheaded the effort. The monument was carved at Webster's factory under the direction of foreman W.B. Sprague. On the day of the monument's unveiling, an estimated 10,000 people crowded onto the courthouse square to hear speeches and watch as Iowa War Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood assisted in the unveiling (Muscatine Journal July 5, 1875, 4).

Richman described the monument in 1911: “(It) consists of a pyramidal base of four steps, the pedestal or die, the shaft and the statue. Upon a solid foundation of masonry ten feet square by five and half feet deep, weighing thirty –four tons, the imposing structure stands. The base is composed of three blocks of limestone and one of marble. On the front of the upper block is carved a shield, upon which is inscribed the legend, “1861-Muscatine County. To her fallen sons -1865.” The die of the pedestal is a marble cube, three feet and four inches in size, with an ornate Grecian cap, showing heavy arched moldings on all

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sides. On the front in bold relief and very handsomely carved, is a coat of arms, with shield, draped flag, spears and guns. Surmounting this is a laurel wreath. Upon this die and upper base piece are inscribed nearly or quite five hundred names. From the die springs a graceful fluted column. At a height of eleven feet it terminates in a coronal of stars, the emblematic thirteen and a Grecian cap ornamented with leaves. Upon this shaft rests the grand crowning piece of the monument – the statue of the American volunteer, six feet two in height, representing a soldier in full uniform, with gun before him, at parade rest. The monument weighs 30 tons. It was constructed upon the broad basis of patriotic pride and not from sordid desires (Richman 1911, 189-90).

A white wrought iron fence originally surrounded the monument, which eventually cost \$6000, but was financed through subscriptions and other donations that Webster apparently received on the dedication day (Muscatine Journal July 5, 1875, 4). The monument was rededicated 50 years later on July 4, 1925 (Muscatine Journal July 4, 1925, 1).

The cannons and other associated items are not mentioned in the original dedication reports, so they were apparently added sometime later. No specific date could be determined through research for this project.

A major change occurred in 1908-09 to the courthouse square with the construction of the new courthouse. The new Beaux Art-style courthouse replaced a brick structure that had been built in 1841, heavily damaged by fire on December 17, 1864, and then rebuilt. J.E. Mills, Detroit, Michigan, was unanimously selected by the county board of supervisors to be the architect on the new courthouse project. Construction on the Muscatine County Courthouse started in 1908, following a May 7, 1907 vote by Muscatine County residents that authorized \$150,000 in bonds at four percent interest for 10 years. The courthouse was completed in 1909. The new jail and sheriff's residence was also constructed at this time, across 4<sup>th</sup> Street from the courthouse and adjacent to the 1856 jail. This building also contained the power plant for the courthouse itself, connected by underground tunnels. The landscape of the square appears to have been designed at this time to accentuate the new, central location of the courthouse. Walks lead to the courthouse from all corners, and the original layout appears to be roughly retained.

The second major monument on the square is the Muscatine County All-Veterans Memorial that was dedicated on May 28, 1998. A committee of Muscatine veterans designed this work. It consists of a seven-and-one-half foot granite slab, which is approximately three feet wide and one foot thick. Two four-foot granite benches accompany the upright centerpiece. The centerpiece bears bronze highlights, a plaque on each of the two widest faces and a bronze eagle atop, constituting a figure more than 11 feet tall. The base is a 10-foot-by-15-foot granite pad. The monument cost \$45,028 to erect (*Muscatine Journal*, September 23, 1998, Page 3A; *Muscatine Journal*, June 30, 1997, 3A; *Muscatine Journal*, May 26, 1998, 1A). Though this addition is outside the typical "historic" definition of elements, it continues to reflect the square as the center of community pride and expression.

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<u>Courthouse Square</u> Name of Property	<u>Muscatine</u> County
<u>3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> St. &amp; Mulberry/Walnut</u> Address	<u>Muscatine</u> City

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

"Celebration To-Morrow," Muscatine Journal, July 2, 1875, 4

City Directories, Muscatine. Various publishers, 1856-present. Available at the Musser Public Library.

"Monument In Court Square Re-Dedicated," Muscatine Journal, July 4, 1925, 1.

"Monument to honor all veterans," Muscatine Journal, June 30, 1997, 3A.

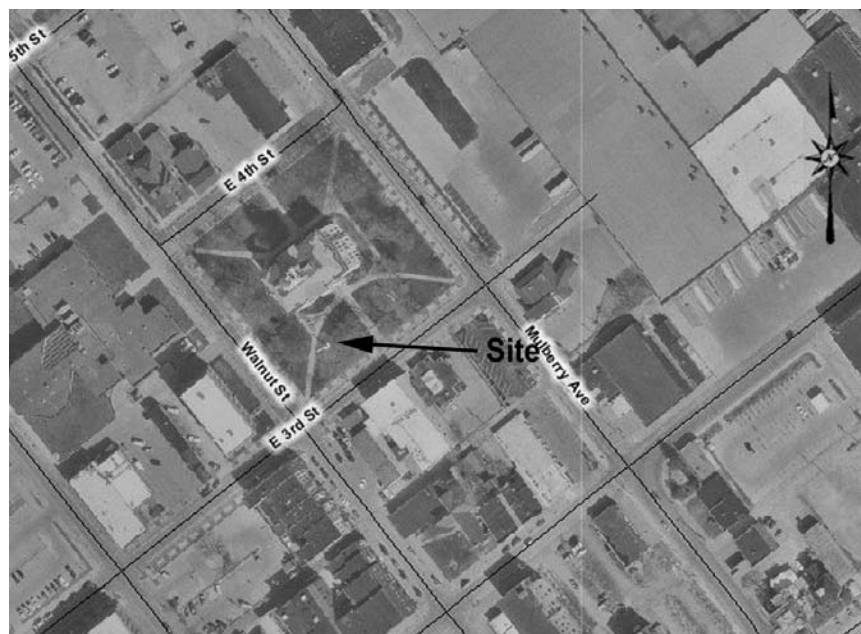
"No longer a debt to pay," Muscatine Journal, September 23, 1998, 3A.

Richman, Irving B. *History of Muscatine County, Iowa*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing, 1911. Vol. 1: 189-192.

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: <http://www.sanborn.umi.com>.

"Unveiling of the Soldiers' Monument by Governor Kirkwood," Muscatine Journal, July 5, 1875, 4.

## Location Map





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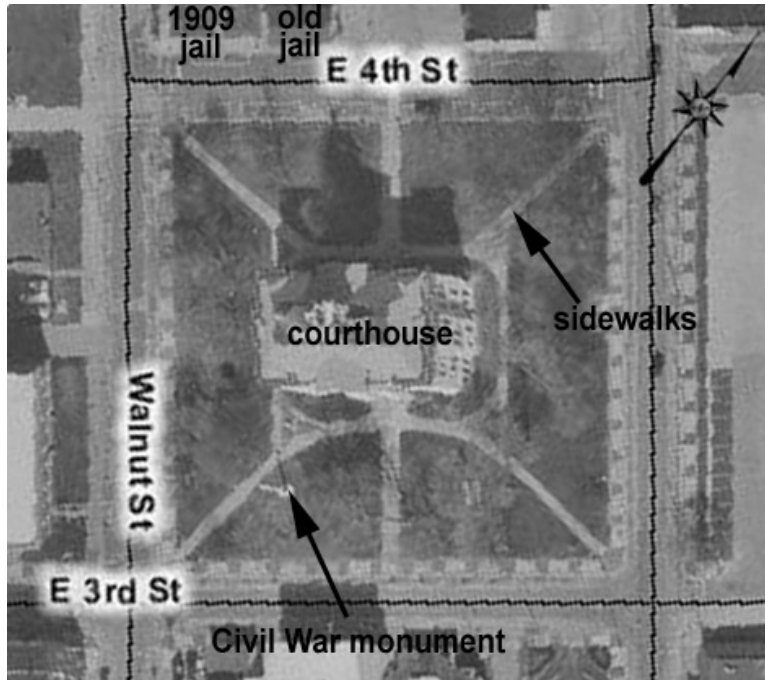
Courthouse Square  
Name of Property

Muscatine  
County

3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> St. & Mulberry/Walnut  
Address

Muscatine  
City

## Site Plan



Photograph of Civil War monument (digital image)

