

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

State Inventory No. 70-00191  New  Supplemental  
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 70-01005  
 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 L.A. Baird House  
 other names/site number Field Site #: WH-037

**2. Location**

street & number 718 W 2<sup>nd</sup> St  
 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) 5 Lot(s) 10 & W 1/2 Lot 9 & E 30' vac. alley

**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)	Enter number of:	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____ buildings	<u>1</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____ sites	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____ structures	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____ 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 \_\_\_\_\_

A Historical and Architectural Survey of the "West Hill" neighborhood, Muscatine, Iowa 70-016

**6. Function or Use**

<b>Historic Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Current Functions</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>01A01: Domestic / Single residence</u>	<u>01A01: Domestic/single residence</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____

**7. Description**

<b>Architectural Classification</b> (Enter categories from instructions)	<b>Materials</b> (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>09A02: Other/Gabled-Front and Wing</u>	foundation <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	walls <u>02A: Weatherboard</u>
_____	roof <u>08A: Shingle</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 718 W 2nd Site Number 70-00191  
City Muscatine District Number 70-01005

**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)

31: Other – neighborhood development

**Significant Dates**

Construction date 1884  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 Jo Ann Carlson, Commission Member (R.L. McCarley, consultant)

organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date 12/15/2005

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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L.A. Baird House  
Name of Property

Muscatine  
County

718 W 2nd  
Address

Muscatine  
City

## 7. Narrative Description

This is a two-story, two-bay, gable-front with wing house. The house sets on a brick foundation. The walls are frame, clad in weatherboard. The combination roof is clad in asphalt shingles. The back of the property drops off sharply. A set of stone steps on the west side of the lot leads down the bluff to the lower back yard.

The front (north) elevation of this house features the front gable with the original front entry located in the northwest corner of the first story. The entry features a pair of two-panel, wood doors with narrow, round-top, glass inserts located in the upper panel of each door. Each lower panel is blind. To the far left of the entry is a two-over-two, double-hung wood window. There are two windows on the second story. Each window is aligned with one of the first-story openings and both contain two-over-two-light, double-hung sashes. The upper gable contains a one-over-one-light, double-hung attic window with a round top and lintel. The other windows on this elevation contain plain flat lintels with no sills. The north wall of a hip roof wing or extension is also visible. The extension sets back a short distance from the front plane of the main house's gable end, exposing a short section of the main house's east wall. A two-over-two-light, double-hung window is located in this short exposed section. The north wall of the wing or extension contains a shorter one-over-one-light, double-hung window at the far left. A small, single-light casement window is centered in the upper part of the wall.

The main feature on the west side elevation of the house is a one-story enclosed porch located at the back of the wall. A hip roof covers the enclosed porch. An entry is present on the porch's north wall. The entry contains a solid, flush-mounted, non-historic door. A single, two-over-two-light, double-hung window is centered on the porch's west wall. There is a single, two-over-two-light, double-hung window located on the second story over the enclosed porch.

The one-story wing is attached to the east side elevation. A carport, which is covered by a shed roof, is attached to the east wall of the wing. There are three openings on the east wall of the wing under the carport. The right opening contains a flush-mounted entry with a wood storm door and historic wood interior door. The remaining two openings are both windows located on the left side of the wall. The right window is located under the carport while the left window is located outside the carport. Each window contains two-over-two-light, double-hung sashes.

The rear elevation of the house includes a one-story bay window that extends out from the southeast corner of the main house's gable end. Small brackets support the flat roof of the bay window. Each bay contains a one-over-one-light, double-hung window. A single window containing two-over-two-light, double-hung sashes is located to the left of the bay window. Three windows are located on the gable end's second story. All three windows contain two-over-two-light, double-hung sashes. Two of the windows are centered over the bay window, while the third is aligned over the first-story window on the left side of the elevation. An attic window that is similar to the attic window on the front is also present on this elevation. An open porch extends across the back wall of the attached wing. Two square columns

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support the flat roof of the porch. A flush-mounted entry is located on the left side of the wing's back wall. The entry contains a wood storm door and wood interior door. A one-over-one-light, double-hung wood window is located on the right side of the wall.

## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The L.A. Baird House 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 "West Hill" neighborhood historic district.

L.A. (Leondis) Baird constructed this house around 1884, after purchasing the property from the Smalley family. Baird was born in Indiana around 1848 to William and Rhoda Baird. It is unknown when he arrived in Muscatine. He is listed in the 1900 census as retired at 218 West Sixth. Baird does not appear to have made any significant contribution to the community. No significant event is known to have occurred at this location. And finally, although in good condition, with most of its integrity intact, the house does not contain any architectural features that stand out as significant. Additionally, a carport has been built on the east side. It does not have a specific style associated with it, and there are an abundance of gabled-front houses in both the neighborhood and throughout the city. Thus, the L.A. Baird House does not appear to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, or C.

However, the L.A. Baird House does appear to be a contributing building in a potential "West Hill" neighborhood historic district. Although Baird does not appear to have been an influential member of the community, the construction of the house continued to expand the housing on West Hill and maintain its growth and development. It also appears Baird might have had an arrangement with the Smalley family for its construction, since Elizabeth and Abraham Smalley sold the ground to him and other family members later bought it back. Any association with the Smalley family would have boosted the prestige of the construction and increased interest in the area. The house significantly contributes to the history and architecture of this potential historic district.

L.A. (Leonidas) Baird, possibly a farmer, appears to have built this house some time after purchasing the property in 1884. Elizabeth Smalley sold the west ½ of Lot 9 Block 5 to L.A. (Leonidas) Baird on July 16, 1884 for \$175 (Book 18, Page 378). That same day, Abraham Smalley sold Lot 10, Block 5 to Baird for \$600 (Book 18, Page 377). Although the present house occupies only Lot 10, and Baird paid almost double for that lot what he paid for half of Lot 9, it seems unlikely that this substantial of a building was on the property at the time he purchased it. According to the 1860 census, Baird was born in Indiana around 1848 and apparently moved to the Muscatine area with his parents, William and Rhoda Baird. The 1860 census records the Baird family as residents of Goshen Township near West Liberty. In addition to William, 50; Rhoda, 40; and Leonidas, 12; two other people, Margaret Gilliland, 12; and Freeman Stiles, 30, were also listed in the household. Though William and Rhoda continued to live near West Liberty in 1880, Leonidas does not reappear in the census records until 1900, when he shows up at 218 West

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Sixth. He is then listed as retired. In the 1886 city directory, LA Baird worked as a carpenter at Muscatine Lumber Co. and resided at 800 West 2<sup>nd</sup>. Though the address later changed to 718, this does appear to be this house. In 1889 city directory, LA Baird worked as a proprietor of a ferry boat. He resided at 800 West 2<sup>nd</sup>. In 1893 city directory, there was no L.A. Baird listing.

Ten years later, on July 28, 1894, L.A. (Leonidas) Baird sold the property to H.E. Smalley for \$2500 (Book 26, Page 234). H.E. Smalley was likely Harry E. Smalley, son of Elizabeth and Abraham Smalley. According to Abraham Smalley's 1889 biography, Harry was living in Council Bluffs, Iowa in 1889, but no census record for him anywhere in Iowa was found. In 1893 the city directory listed H.E. Smalley at 810 West 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, Abraham's house. He was a woodturner at Muscatine Sash & Door. In the 1897 city directory, Harry worked for Rutherford & Smalley and lived at 718 West 2<sup>nd</sup>. There is no listing for H.E. Smalley in the 1900 city directory.

H.E. Smalley transferred the entire property to Abraham Smalley for \$1 on February 19, 1900 (Book 33, Page 265). Abstract records show the property remained in the Smalley family until 1904, but records show they rented the house to tenants. John and Charlotte Fiedler were listed at 718 W. Second in the 1900 census. Fiedler was identified as a renter in the census. He worked as a bartender. There apparently was a change in tenants that same year because the 1900 city directory identified Charles P. and Stella Malone as the residents. The 1902 city directory lists John C. and Lotta M. Fiedler living at 718 West 2<sup>nd</sup>. He was listed as working at Fiedler and Nickles Saloon. In 1904 city directory listed H.E. Wiley as living at 718 West 2<sup>nd</sup>. He was a druggist.

The heirs of Abraham Smalley sold the Lot 10 and the W ½ of Lot 9, Block 5 to Esther S. Ealls on December 8, 1904 for \$1400. The 1900 census noted that Abraham's daughter Esther Eells (36) lived with her husband J.W. Eells (41) at the neighboring home of her parents, Abraham and Eliza. She continued to rent out the house. The Malones continued to live there until 1908, when Wm E & Jennie H Downer manager of Batterson Store lived there. The 1910 census confirms Downer, 38, and his wife, 36, as the only tenants. It identifies Downer as the manager of Batterson's. However, the address appears to be 716 W. Second and it looks like his wife's is identified as "May J." The census does record the Downers had been married for seven years.

Con (assumed to be Cornelius) and Ella (assumed to be Ellen) Cronin and their family are listed in the 1916 city directory. Con was the section foreman for the CRI&P Railroad. Several other family members were also listed as residents. These included: Michael Francis, secretary for Congressman Steele, and his wife Marian; Emmett J, reporter for the News-Tribune; Mabel, student; Celeste, student; May, stenographer to the county school superintendent; Winnifred, teacher; and Elizabeth, teacher at Jefferson School. According to the Muscatine County history for 1911, Michael Cronin was the county superintendent of schools for Muscatine County. He was born in Parnell, Iowa, May 11, 1887 and was one of the nine children of Cornelius and Ellen (Flanagan) Cronin. They had a large family, including Ellen, Ann, Sarah, Essie, Kate, Winifred and Elizabeth. When Michael was eight, his family moved to Wilton in Muscatine County. He continued his education in the public schools there until he graduated in 1905. After graduation, he taught school before entering the University of Iowa in the summer of 1908.

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About the same time, he announced himself as a candidate for the nomination for county superintendent of schools, which he won in 1908 and 1910. He taught school up to the time of taking the office. Richman notes in 1911 that "He is the youngest county superintendent in the state of Iowa, having been but twenty-one years of age when elected. His ideas concerning education are not only progressive but also practical, and he believes in the careful systematization of the work of the schools so that substantial results may be quickly secured." (Richman 1911, Vol 2: 116). The 1920 census confirmed Con, 67, and Ellen, 63, as the tenants. His occupation was identified as a laborer for the steam railroad. Daughters Winnifred, 23, a bookkeeper for the county commission; Celeste, 22, a schoolteacher; and Mabel, 19, a stenographer, are also listed. There was no census listing for Michael or Marian. The family continued to rent the property through the 1921 city directory. Con Cronin is listed here in 1921 city directory and was listed as retired.

Ellen Cronin purchased the property from Esther Eells on July 10, 1923 (Book 61, Page 379). The Con Cronin family is listed in the 1923-24 through the 1934 city directories at this address, having rented it for five years previous. He is listed as retired.

The 1936 city directory listed the house as vacant. Chas and Alice Nickerson were recorded as the residents in the 1938-39 city directory. He was an electrician. During this period and continuing into 1954, the family made numerous transfers of this property between themselves. From the 1940-41 through the 1965 city directories, school teacher Celeste Cronin was listed as the resident. The 1956 directory also listed John and Audrey Leedy as the residents. He was a laborer at H.J. Heinz, while she was a nurse at Bellevue Hospital.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Census Records, United States Census Bureau, 1860, 1870, 1900, 1910, 1920

City Directories, Muscatine. Various publishers, 1856-1959. Available as the Musser Public Library.

Deed/Abstract Records, Recorder's Office, Muscatine County Courthouse, Muscatine, Iowa.

Koch, Augustus. *Bird's-eye View of the City of Muscatine, Muscatine County, Iowa*. Koch, 1874. In the collections of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

Richman, Irving B. *History of Muscatine County, Iowa*. Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1911, page 116

Sanborn Map Company. "Muscatine, Iowa," Sanborn fire insurance maps. Pelham, NY:  
Sanborn Map Company, 1883, 1888, 1892, 1899, 1907, 1912, 1919, 1928. Accessed online at:  
Sanborn.umi.com.



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Site Number 70-00191

Related District Number 70-01005

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## Photograph of building (digital image)

