

Site Inventory Form

State Historical Society of Iowa

(December 1, 1999)

State Inventory No. 70-01034 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 Sawyer-Stein Rental House

other names/site number Field Site #: WH-088

2. Location

street & number 615 W 3rd 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) 50 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 Enter number of:		If Eligible Property, enter number of: Contributing Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	buildings	1	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> district	sites		sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site	structures		structures
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	objects		objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object	Total	1	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

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

01A01: Domestic / Single residence

01A01: Domestic / Single residence

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

05D: Late Victorian / Queen Anne

foundation 03: Brick

walls 02: Wood Clapboard

roof 08A: Asphalt Shingles

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)

- Yes No More Research Recommended

- A Property is associated with significant events.
- B Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.
- C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.
- D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Muscatine Address 615 W. 3rd Street
City Muscatine

Site Number 70-01034
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)

031: Other/Neighborhood Development

Significant Dates

Construction date

1908

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
1	_____	_____
3	_____	_____

Zone	Easting	Northing
2	_____	_____
4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Christine Conley, Volunteer (R.L. McCarley, consultant)

organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date December 30, 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**

1. **Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
2. **Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
3. **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

1. **Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or non-contributing status)
2. **Barn:**
 - a. A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
 - b. A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
 - c. 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

Sawyer-Stein Rental House Name of Property	Muscatine County
615 W. 3 rd Street Address	Muscatine City

7. Narrative Description

This is a two-story, three-bay, Queen Anne house. The house sits on a brick foundation. The walls are frame, clad in wood clapboard. The combination roof is clad in asphalt shingles. There are two gables in the front; both retain their original fishscale shingles. The windows throughout the house retain their original wood surrounds and wood sills.

The main front gable is centered on the west half of the front (south) elevation of the house and it projects slightly. A full porch stretches across the house. It has three round columns each of which have grooves detailing the top two-thirds of the column. The lower one-third, which meets the railing, is smooth. The single-door entry is located near the center of the first story, to the right of the bay window. It appears to retain its original wood door and the original screen door that is divided into 21 equal panels, three across and seven down. A two-story angled bay window is located in the left bay; it terminates in the projected gable roof. The window in the center section of the bay window on the first story is a large picture window with a transom, and the windows on each of the angled sides is typical size one-over-one-light double-hung windows. The second story has four one-over-one-light double-hung windows, including three in the bay window. All four are of typical and equal size. There is an arch single-light fixed window centered in the projected gable. The recessed gable that appears to be centered on the main roof has a small triangular 20 light fixed window centered in it. Both gables have fishscale shingles.

The east side elevation has two sections. The front section, being the two story main section and a rear one story addition. The front section has one single one-over-one-light double-hung window and a double one-over-one-light double-hung window on the first story. Also a single-door entry is centered in the first story of this main section. A single one-over-one-light double-hung window is in the second story and a single one-over-one-light double-hung window is centered in this section between the first and second story. On the single story addition slightly off center is a single one-over-one-light double-hung window.

The west side elevation has one one-over-one-light double-hung window near the front of the first story and two one-over-one-light double-hung windows in the second story placed at either end of the main house. The rear one-story addition is recessed in an ell from the main house. It has one one-over-one-light double-hung window.

The north elevation runs along the alley. A small one-story gable-roof addition extends from the rear of the main house on the north elevation. Five wood steps lead up to a two-tiered wood deck with a railing. It is attached to the one-story section of the house. There is a single-door entry with a metal door that the top half has nine small windows, also a vinyl $\frac{3}{4}$ glass storm door is noted. Slightly off center of this section is a single one-over-one-light double-hung window. On the rear of the main house, the first story has a double nine-over-nine-light double-hung window. The second story has two single one-over-one-light double-hung windows. The gable on the rear section has a single one-over-one-light double-hung

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 4

Sawyer-Stein Rental House Name of Property	Muscatine County
615 W. 3 rd Street Address	Muscatine City

window centered in it. There is a small section at the peak of the gable that retains the original fishscales. This rear gable also has boxed cornices and returns on either side.

On the south elevation, eight cement steps with a pipe railing on the left side lead to a concrete landing, six wood steps continue up to the wood front porch. A cement sidewalk runs along the east elevation. A small shed sits at the back of the property along the alley. It looks to be a modern pre-fabricated kit that is purchased at any home improvement center. It has no historical value. However the alley behind the house is of historic brick.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Sawyer-Stein Rental 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.

James and Agnes St. John, who owned the property from 1902-1908, and businessman Stephen P. Sawyer, who owned the property from 1908-1911 were both involved in real estate development in this period in Muscatine. While it is unclear which party actually constructed the house, an earlier building was demolished prior to the construction of this house. It does not appear that St. John ever rented this property to tenants, and Sawyer only rented it for about one year prior to dying in 1911. The property passed to his daughter Clara Stein, who did use it as a rental property for several years. Another daughter, Jennie S. Day, had acquired the neighboring duplex from their father a few years earlier, and it is possible that he built both buildings, passing them onto his daughters. None of these individuals appears to be significantly associated with this house. Additionally no significant events appear to be associated with this house. Finally the Queen Anne house retains a high level of integrity, but there are several additional examples of this style in the West Hill neighborhood and throughout Muscatine. It has many modern features including the windows and replacement doors and deck in the rear of the house that detract some from its original integrity. Thus, the Sawyer-Stein House does not appear to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A, B, or C.

However, the Sawyer-Stein House does appear to be a contributing building in a potential "West Hill" neighborhood historic district. It reflects the neighborhood development of this area in the late 19th century. Though the house has many modern updates, most are in the rear of the house and it retains some key and prominent Queen Anne features. The house contributes historically and architecturally to this potential historic district.

On June 26, 1894, Alden B. Robbins, widower, sold Lot 2, Block 50 to his sons, Horace B. and John A. Robbins (Book 26; Page 212). He also sold Lot 1, Block 50 around the same time, also to his sons. The house at 615 was built after this time, replacing the small gable-front house shown on the 1874 birds-eye view. When A.B. Robbins died on December 28, 1896, his estate passed the property to John A. Robbins, Horace Robbins, Anna DeForest, Esther White, and Helen Robbins. It is unlikely that they built

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 5

Sawyer-Stein Rental House

Muscatine

Name of Property

County

615 W. 3rd Street

Muscatine

Address

City

a new house prior to selling the property. The heirs sold Lot 2, Block 50 to John and Helena Tappe on February 16, 1902 (Book 33; Page 781). Five months later, they sold it on July 28, 1902 to Agnes St. John for \$1650 (Book 35, pg. 649). Agnes had previously purchased Lot 1 on the corner. Agnes sold part of this property (South 85' of Lot 1 + a strip of ground 5' width adjoining and then a side of the North line of the lot) to S.P. Sawyer on May 16, 1905 for \$2000 (Book 38; Page. 230). St. John was the wife of James H. St. John. He was born in New York in 1852 and came to Muscatine with his parents in 1856. He was a junior member of the Lillibridge and St. John grocery firm. Both St. John, 49; and his wife Agnes, 38, who was born in Iowa, were listed in the 1900 census at 313 Cherry Street. They were identified as the owners. Others in the household included sons James, 9; Edwin, 7; Lewis, 5; and daughter Agnes, 1. Anne Bartenhagen, 19, a German immigrant, was also listed as a servant. They owned several parcels of land, and appear to have been involved in real estate development. The 1902-03 directory and 1904 directory have no listing for 615 W. Third Street, which may indicate construction in this period. Or it was possibly just related to St. John's sale of Lot 1 and the small sliver of Lot 2 to Sawyer than construction of a new house by her on the remainder of Lot 2. Sawyer acquired all of Lot 2, Block 50, except for a five-foot strip on the west side of the lot, from Agnes St. John on December 30, 1908 for \$2000 (Book 41; Page 592). About three years earlier he had bought Lot 1 and the five-foot strip of Lot 2, Block 50 from St. John for \$2000 (Book 38; Page 230) and built a duplex, which he later sold to another daughter, Jennie S. Day, for \$1 (or, Lyle and Jennie Day may have built it after their received the property in 1906). Sawyer was also involved in real estate development, as indicated by the construction of the neighboring duplex. The similarities in St. John's purchase and sale prices may indicate that no new construction occurred on this lot between 1902 and 1908.

While the 1902-03 and 1904 directories have no listings for this or a similar address, the 1907 directory has a listing for 315, but the 1908 does not. Mark and Frances Anson are listed as the residents of 615 W. Third in the 1907 directory, however this may be a 617 listing as no listing for that address is included in the 1907 directory. (619, the other half of the duplex, is listed). He was a salesman for Roach and Musser. In the 1908 directory, the Ansons were at 617 W. Third, the first time that address is recorded in any recent directory; and 615 W. Third is not listed. Thus, it seems like the 1907 listing was actually for 317 not 315. This would then indicate no listing for 315 in 1902-03, 1904, 1907, or 1908 – the entire time that St. John owned the house. It is possible that the house was inhabitable during this time, or that St. John could have been constructed this house in this period, then selling it rather than renting it upon completion. The sales price of \$2,000 to Sawyer in 1908 definitely indicates some improvements on the lot. However, Sawyer built the adjacent duplex at 617-619 around 1905-06, it is possible he also constructed 615 W. Third in 1909 after purchasing this property. The 1910 census lists George and Flora Wells, and their 14-year-old son Lloyd as renting 615. This would give Sawyer sufficient time after December 1908 to have demolished an earlier house and built this new one.

Sawyer was a successful businessman who was active in several ventures throughout his life. He was born in 1831 in Massachusetts, but moved to Canada when he was 17. He lived there for 23 years, engaged in the manufacture of agricultural implements. He moved to Muscatine in 1871. Prior to that on June 21, 1853, he married Frances P. Gillitt of Newport, New Hampshire. She died on March 18, 1897. They had seven children, including Ida M., who married Fred Welker of Muscatine; Frank P., who

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 6

Sawyer-Stein Rental House Name of Property	Muscatine County
615 W. 3 rd Street Address	Muscatine City

married Johanna Wells; Aura A., Clara S., who married Dr. S.G. Stein of Muscatine; Samuel F., who married Nellie Stephens; Jennie H., who married Lyle C. Day; and Armina Rosaline, who died as a child. After arriving in Muscatine, Sawyer became a junior partner in the hardware firm of McQuesten and Sawyer. McQuesten was Sawyer's mother's maiden name, so it appears likely the two partners were related. Following the retirement in 1894 of the two original partners, their sons assumed charge of the business. Under their sons, the business expanded and became familiar over a wide region of the Mississippi River valley (Richman, 1911, 612). Sawyer was also active in other business ventures, including the founding of the Muscatine Oat Meal mill. At the time it was founded, the mill was one of the largest industrial institutions in the community (Muscatine Journal, 1911, 10). Sawyer also became involved in the operation of the First National Bank, whose president was Dr. S.G. Stein, Sawyer's son-in-law. Sawyer acquired all of Lot 2, Block 50, except for a five-foot strip on the west side of the lot, from Agnes St. John on December 30, 1908 for \$2000 (Book 41; Page 592). About three years earlier he had bought Lot 1 and the five-foot strip of Lot 2, Block 50 from St. John for \$2000 (Book 38; Page 230) and had built a duplex, which he later sold to another daughter, Clara Stein, for \$1. Stephen P. Sawyer died on March 23, 1911.

Stephen P. Sawyer's Estate, executor Frank Sawyer, sold Lot 2, Block 50 to daughter Clara S. Stein on July 6, 1911 for \$1, as specified in the will (Book 44; Page 82). The 1911 city directory lists George M. and Flora S. Wells at this address. George was the manager of the S. G. & P. Stein furniture store. In the city directories from 1911-1934, George M. and Flora S. Wells are listed jointly as the residents here. George is indicated as a manager at S. G. & P. Stein, a furniture store associated with the property owner through this period. The 1920 census indicates that George and Flora Wells are the only residents at 615 W. Third Street.

On May 26, 1924 Simon G. Stein is shown as purchasing this property from 1st National Bank of Muscatine (Trustees Deed Book 58; Page 694). On December 4, 1931, Jessie W. Stein, wife of Simon Stein (son of Simon G. Stein) is shown as an owner (Warranty Deed Book 8; Page 50). However, the property appears to have continued to be rented to the Wells. From 1934-1946, George is the only resident listed here, as Flora apparently died.

The city directories list Helen McIlrath, (widow of W.H.) as the resident here from 1949-1959. Helen's only occupation is listed as executive director of the YWCA in the 1956 city directory. As the deed information continues, Simon G. Stein, executor, (Jessie Stein, deceased) sold the property to Helen McIlrath on May 24, 1960 (Court Officer Deed Book 191; Page 242). She may have been a family member or rented it for a number of years prior to an actual transfer of ownership.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Census Records, United States Census Bureau, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1900, 1910, 1920.

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

Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 7

Sawyer-Stein Rental House	Muscatine
Name of Property	County
615 W. 3 rd Street	Muscatine
Address	City

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

"Dr. A.B. Robbins – Death of this Distinguished Clergyman and Highly Esteemed Citizen," *Muscatine Journal*, December 28, 1896, Page 4.

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.

Portrait and Biographical Album of Muscatine County, Iowa. Chicago: Acme Publishing, 1889.

"Prominent Local Resident Is Dead," Obituary of S.P. Sawyer, *Muscatine Journal*, March 23, 1911, page 10.

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

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.

Location Map



Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 8

Sawyer-Stein Rental House

Muscatine

Name of Property

County

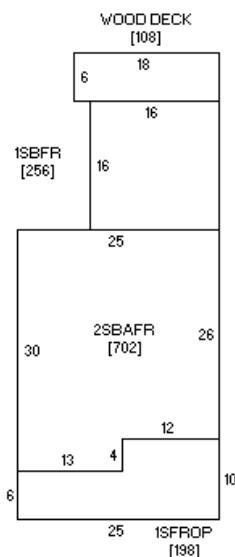
615 W. 3rd Street

Muscatine

Address

City

Plans of buildings on site (from assessor's office)



(front – W. 3rd Street)

Photograph of building (digital image)

