

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

State Inventory No. 70-00239 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 Smalley-Warfield-McKee House
 other names/site number Field Site #: WH-113

2. Location

street & number 809 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) 48 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:	
	Enter number of:	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	_____ buildings	<u>2</u>	_____ buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____ sites	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____ structures	_____	_____ structures
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____ objects	_____	_____ objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____ Total	<u>2</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

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

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>05D: Victorian / Queen Anne</u>	foundation <u>03: Brick</u>
_____	walls <u>02A: Wood/Weatherboards</u>
_____	roof <u>08A: Asphalt shingles</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
City Muscatine

Address 809 W. 3rd Street

Site Number 70-00239
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 1853 check if circa or estimated date
Other dates 1890s, 1920s, 1990-91

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 Barbara Sabbath / Rebecca Lawin McCarley, consultant
organization Muscatine Historic Preservation Commission date February 23, 2006
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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Smalley-Warfield-McKee House
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7. Narrative Description

This is a two-story, Queen Anne house that represents modifications to an earlier dwelling. The house sits on a brick foundation, with some concrete block. The walls are frame, clad in weatherboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles. With c.1900 grading along W. 3rd Street, this house was left at the top of a slight hill. About 15 concrete steps lead up the front yard to the house, and a non-historic concrete block retaining wall extends across the front of the property.

Originally, this house appears to have been a three-bay, double pile dwelling similar to the house at 807 W. 3rd Street. It was likely built by Abraham Smalley in the 1850s, and his mother Rhoda Smalley lived in the neighboring c.1839 house at 807 W. 3rd Street. The 1874 bird's eye view of Muscatine shows both houses. This house at 809 W. 3rd Street is shown as a two-story, three-bay dwelling with a long rear ell connected to a perhaps a carriage house that have a gable roof that projects to the west of the main house. A porch wraps around the front and west side of the house and rear ell. Though a two-story bay window has been added to the façade and a two-story side addition projects to the west, the original square form remains clearly visible. It has been suggested that Charles and Grace Warfield made the initial Queen Anne changes (bay window) around 1886, after marrying and acquiring the property from her mother. It is also possible that the alterations were not made until after Levi Johnson bought the house in 1894 or after James McKee bought the house in 1900. The c.1914 photograph in *Muscatine, Iowa: The Pearl City* shows the first round of alterations complete, including the front bay window. The 1928 Sanborn map is the first to cover this block, and it shows a similar footprint to the current building (with exception of side additions to rear ell), with the far rear portion (barn?) shown previously perhaps removed. The two-story side addition near the front on the west appears on this map, but was not shown in the 1914 photograph. Thus, this side addition was likely added in the 1920s after James McKee moved in. The wrap around porch on the 1914 photograph is also removed by 1928. The carriage house along the rear alley also appears by this 1928 map. It is possible that the rear alteration occurred at the same time as the side alterations. The rear has also been somewhat modified in recent years.

The current façade (south elevation) has an entry in the left bay and a two-story angled bay window on the right half. The entry has a pedimented surround with fluted pilasters. A diamond pane transom window spans both doors of the entry. The doors appear non-historic. A small one-over-one-light double-hung window is found above this entry. The two-story bay window on the right half of the façade has a one-over-one-light double-hung window on each of the three sides of both stories. The middle window is slightly wider than the side windows. The bay window has a gable roof that extends over the angled corners and is supported by small sunburst brackets. The gable is clad in fishscale wood windows, and bargeboard decorates the gable peak. The side addition extends to the west, slightly setback from the main elevation of the house. Paired one-over-one-light double-hung windows are found on the south elevation of this c.1920s addition, and a one-over-one-light double-hung window is centered on the second story. This addition is not shown on the 1914 photograph, but it does appear on the 1918 Sanborn map. The wrap around porch shown in the 1914 photograph was also removed by 1928.

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The east elevation includes the side of the main house, and then the sides of two rear sections. The main house has a brick chimney that pierces the eave just behind the gable peak. A one-over-one-light double-hung window is found on either side of the chimney on both stories. A small section extends about 7 feet behind the house, and it has a separate roofline than the rear section behind it. This small section has one window on this elevation. Finally, a longer 17-foot section extends to the rear. This section has a shed roof oriented to the side, and it is possible that it is half of the rear gable-roof section shown on the 1874 bird's-eye view. It is also possible that this section was reconstructed on part of an earlier foundation. The 1928 Sanborn map shows rear additions extending about to the rear wall of this last section, and then a one-story addition further behind it. The east elevation of this two-story rear section has paired one-over-one-light double-hung windows centered on the first story.

The west elevation has a similar composition of the main house followed by rear sections. The gable-end of the original house is mostly covered by the c.1920s two-story side addition, and a non-historic one-story addition that continue to alterations along this side of the rear sections. The 1914 photograph shows the side appearance before the c.1920s front side addition, as well as the later additions along the rear sections. A one-over-one-light double-hung window is visible on this side of the original house. The side of the 1920s addition has two-story angled bay window that does not appear historic. No such feature is shown here on the 1928 Sanborn map. Modifications appear to have been made to this side of the rear sections, mostly on the first story. The rooflines of the older rear sections terminate at the same ridgeline, creating the half-gable appearance of the shed roof. The first story has been partially built out, with a room nearest to the front, slightly built out section, and porch extending further back and around the rear elevation. A bay window is seen on the second story, though the first story is also built out at this point. Though the window appears non-historic, a two-story bay window is shown at this location on the 1928 and 1946 Sanborn maps.

The north (rear) elevation also reflects this series of rear sections. The left (east) side of the main house is visible. A one-over-one-light double-hung window is found on the second story. The shed-roof porch from the west elevation extends around the last rear section to this elevation. The first story of the rear section under this porch is clad in board and batten siding, suggesting a later modification. A single-door entry is found here. A set of three windows is toward the right side of the second story, clearing the slanting shed roof. The side windows have three rectangular lights.

A two-story carriage house is built into the slight hill at the rear of the property along the alley. This building appears on the 1928 Sanborn map as a garage. Originally, living space was found on the second story. It sits on a brick and concrete foundation, and it is clad in a variety of materials. The north elevation, facing the alley, has a two-car non-historic garage door on the east half, with a projecting shed roof above it. A six-over-six-light double-hung window is centered over this door. While the lower portion is clad in board and batten siding, the second story is clad in cedar siding. The west half of the north elevation is clad in board siding. The east elevation has no openings, and the lower half is clad in board and batten siding, and the portion to just below the gable is clad in cedar siding. The south elevation, facing the house, appears only one story, with access directly into the upper level above the garage. It has two entries and two windows. The west elevation is associated with the adjacent property.

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The current owner, the McGowan's, made several changes in the 1990s. In 1991, the rear porch was enclosed. Triple full-length windows were added in the new kitchen area off the enclosed porch on the west side. In 1992, the front window on the front two-story 1920s side addition was replaced with a double-hung window, and a bay window was added on the west where there was no window. Two windows on the front were also replaced, and a second story bay window was added on the west side of the rear sections above the existing bay window. A new porch was created on the west side of the house by extending the roofline. A concrete aggregate floor ties in with the existing porch at the rear of the house, creating a wrap around porch. A new wood door with glass sections replaced the back door. In 1993, the front doors were replaced with the doors with oval beveled inserts. In 1994, a bay window replaced a second story window in the back bedroom on the west side, and a crank out window on the east side was removed and the opening covered. Finally, in 2004, some older siding was replaced with new cedar siding, prior to the house being painted. New crown molding was also installed above all the windows to give the house a uniform appearance, some replacing historic and some above windows with no molding.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Smalley-Warfield-McKee House at 809 W. 3rd Street appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B. Additionally, it does appear to be a contributing building in a potential "West Hill" neighborhood historic district.

The house was associated with several early prominent families, including Smalley (1852-1863), Warfield (1885-1894), and Johnson (1894-1900), before being sold to James S. McKee in 1900. The Queen Anne alterations were made in the late 19th or early 20th century. At this time, it is not known if Charles Warfield, Dr. Levi Johnson, or James S. McKee made this character defining changes, but they certainly were completed by the time that McKee lived here from 1900 to 1915. James McKee was instrumentally in forming one of the largest button companies in Muscatine, with his brother-in-law William Bliven as a financier. It began as McKee and Bliven Button Company in the late 1890s, shortly before he moved into this house. Around 1910, they relocated to their headquarters at 1000 Hershey. James S. McKee continued to live here until around 1915. William Bliven died in 1915, and the company continued to be run by James S. McKee and his sons Harold and Albert. Around 1920, Albert S. and Madeline McKee moved into this house at 809 W. 3rd Street. On July 1, 1926, the family incorporated the company as the McKee Button Company. James died in January 1927, and after the death of his brother in July 1936, Albert S. McKee became head of the McKee Button Company at age 46. In 1938, McKee Button Company was known as the largest freshwater pearl button factory in the United States, with branches throughout the country and distribution worldwide. Albert S. McKee continued to live here until his death in 1948. McKee Button Company made the transition to synthetic buttons, and it continued to operate in Muscatine in 2006, with 70% of their line as custom-made buttons. Though some changes have been made to this house since 1948, the overall form of the early house remodeled as a Queen Anne house remains. Thus, the house at 809 W. 3rd Street appears to be eligible for the

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National Register of Historic Places under Criterion B for its association with James S. McKee and Albert S. McKee.

Additionally, the Smalley-Warfield-McKee House does appear to be a contributing building in a potential "West Hill" neighborhood historic district. The original construction in the 1850s is one of the older homes in this section of the West Hill neighborhood. The late 19th or early 20th century remodeling to add Queen Anne features demonstrates the growing neighborhood and the desire of the owner to keep pace with the change, more decorative styles. The house continued to be modified in the 1920s to accommodate the Albert McKee family. It is associated with several prominent Muscatine families, before the McKee's first moved here in 1900, and they were associated with the house for the first half of the 20th century.

The house in its original form appears to have been constructed in the 1850s or 1860s. William Todd bought Lot 2 in 1841 from William St. John. Todd is listed in Louisa County in the 1840 census, and he laid out the town of Hillsboro (Altoona, Toddsville) about ¾ mile north of Columbus Junction in 1842. This appears to have been a land investment only, as there is no evidence at this time that they lived in Muscatine. William & Lucinda Todd sold Lot 2 to Abraham Smalley for \$110 on September 17, 1852, indicating no house had been built (Lots Book L: 38). Smalley's family home was located next door at 807 W. 3rd Street (Lot 3), and he is listed in this household in the 1850 census. However, on May 26, 1850, Abraham Smalley married Sicha W. Nichols, and with their first child born in 1851 and perhaps this purchase in 1852 signaled a move out of the family house to the neighboring property. On February 6, 1855, he bought a lot on E. 2nd Street, on the bluff to the south, and local history states that he built a house on that lot in 1855. However, this may not have been built until the early 1860s, with Abraham continuing to live here at 809 W. 3rd Street. In the 1856 city directory, he is listed at neither of these locations, rather at the west side of Cherry, south of 3rd Street. He also owned this property in this period, as he made sash and door at southeast corner of 3rd and Cherry (across from his mother's property) in the early 1850s. However, this listing could refer to a business rather than residential location. Abraham Smalley is not listed in the 1859 city directory, further complicating matters. In 1859, Mrs. R. Smalley is listed on the north side of 3rd between Cherry and Ash.

Abraham Smalley does appear in the 1860 census. His wife Sicha died on April 27, 1860 at the age of 39 years old. She was buried behind the family homestead at 807 W. 3rd Street (see 70-00238). The 1860 census lists Abraham Smalley as a 45-year-old male, with the occupation of "gentleman," indicating his position in the community by this time. His real estate holdings were valued at \$40,000, with personal property at \$20,000 – a fortune for the period. His household reflects the death of his wife, and his three children are listed: David (9), Imogene (6), and George W. (3). Hama (sp?) Tuttle was listed as his 60-year-old housekeeper. She owned \$1,000 in real estate as well. In 1861, at age 46, he married Eliza E. Mathis, also a native of New Jersey. They had two children, Esther May (who married Joseph W. Eells, a well-known lawyer of Muscatine) and Harry E. (who married Edna McElravy). It is possible that Abraham Smalley continued to live at 809 W. 3rd Street until he remarried and then built the new house on 2nd Street, moving there with his new wife.

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On March 4, 1863, Abraham and Eliza E. Smalley sold Lot 1 and 2 to Joseph Richardson for \$1,242.70 (Lots Book V: 285). The price does indicate a house constructed by 1863. By the 1866 city directory, Smalley is listed on the south side of 2nd Street, 1 west of Cherry on the property that he bought in 1855. This house at 814 W. 2nd Street is better associated with Abraham Smalley than the properties on 3rd Street. Richardson is listed in the 1860 census as a 24-year-old bank teller with \$1,000 in real estate. He wife Sylvia (23) is also listed with him, and Mary Foster (20) who worked a servant was also listed in their household. The 1866 city directory lists Joseph Richardson as living on 3rd Street, 3 west of Cherry, which would be this house (Rhoda Smalley lived on 3rd Street, 2 west of Cherry in the adjacent house). He was listed as a cashier at the Muscatine National Bank. The 1869 city directory lists him at the northeast corner of 3rd and Ash, and worked as the president of Muscatine National Bank.

On December 3, 1869, the property (Lot 1 and 2) was transferred to his wife Sylvia, perhaps after his death though no death date could be confirmed (Lots Book 6: 361). The 1870 census lists S.E. Richardson as a 42-year-old female, living with her 10-year-old daughter Stella and 22-year-old domestic servant Bridget Laymah. She owned \$5,000 in real estate and \$20,000 in personal property. The 1874 city directory lists Mrs. Sylvia Richardson on the north side of 3rd, east of Ash. She apparently remarried in the mid-1870s. The 1877 city directory lists Nathan Reed, Jr., a lawyer, as residing on the north side of 3rd Street, 3 west of Cherry. According to the abstract, Sylvia E. Reed died on January 21, 1878, and the property passed to her adopted daughter, Stella M. Richardson.

Stella Richardson sold the property (lots 1 and 2) to Frances L. Fletcher, a widow, in 1878. Frances was the widow of General Jonathon E. Fletcher, who had died April 6, 1872. They lived about six miles west of Muscatine (*Portrait and Biographical Album of Muscatine County* 1889: 534). The 1877 city directory lists here as living on Lucas Grove Road near Newell. The 1879 city directory list Mrs. J.E. Fletcher as living on the north side of 3rd Street, east of Locust, which would not be this house. The 1880 census lists Frances Fletcher, widow, age 62, with her son Samuel E. (27, salesman), son Glenn (25, railroad depot), daughter Grace (21), son William K. (18), son Lyle (16), and Eve (30). In 1883, Mrs. L.H. Fletcher, widow, and L.M. Fletcher, surveyor, and W.K. Fletcher were listed here.

On October 7, 1885, Frances transferred the property to her daughter Grace Fletcher through a quit claim deed (Lots Book 14: 323). Also in October, Grace Fletcher married Charles L. Warfield. Both were children of prominent pioneer citizens. The 1887-87 city directory lists Charles Warfield at 809 W. 3rd Street. He was a ticket agent for the C.R.I. & P. and B.C.R. & N. railroads. He continued to be listed as such in the 1889 city directory, which also lists a telephone number for him. In 1891, he is listed as a breeder of "highly bred trotting stock" and in 1893 as a breeder of trotting horses. Perhaps it was this change of occupation that led them to sell the house in 1894. He was listed as a stockman boarding at 217 W. 2nd Street in 1895. It may have been during the Warfield's residency in the house that the initial alterations were made.

On July 28, 1894, Charles L. and Grace F. Warfield sold the property to Levi D. and Mary B. Johnson for \$3,239 (Lots Book 26: 235). It may have been during the Johnson's residency in the house that the

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initial alterations were made. He was not listed in the 1893 city directory. The 1895 city directory lists L.D. Johnson, physician and surgeon, as living at 809 W. 3rd Street. The 1897 city directory lists him as practicing with Johnson & Battey. He was not listed in the 1899 city directory, and he is not listed in the 1900 census in Muscatine County.

On June 14, 1900, Levi D. and Mary B. Johnson sold the property (lots 1 and 2) to James S. McKee (Lots Book 33: 437). It is possible that it was not until the McKee's residency in the house that the initial alterations were made. The 1900 census lists J.S. McKee as living at and owning 809 W. 3rd Street. He was 34 and manager of a button factory. His household included his wife Anna (34), son Albert S. (10), son J. Harold (7), daughter Nellie (4), and mother-in-law Marison Bliven (66). A servant, Lillie Metzger (24), was also listed with them. McKee married Anna Bliven on February 27, 1889 near Conesville, Iowa. In 1893, they moved to Muscatine. McKee initially worked for R.B. Huff, but became a grain buyer for Muscatine Oat Meal Company on March 3, 1894. The 1897 city directory listed them at 701 W. 3rd Street, and James S. as a buyer for the Oatmeal Company. He became associated with the Peerless Pearl Button Company, and with William Bliven bought out the other interests. He became the full time manager in July 1899. The purchase of this house in 1900 coincided with his move into the field of pearl buttons. The 1900 city directory lists them at 809 W. 3rd Street, and McKee as associated with Bliven & McKee Button Company. The 1904 city directory lists James S. and Anna B. McKee at this address, and he is president of the Peerless Pearl Button Company. In November 1904, the company name changed from Peerless to McKee & Bliven officially. The 1907 city directory then lists him as associated with McKee & Bliven Pearl Button Factory. The 1910 census lists James S. McKee (44, manufacturer of pearl buttons), Anna B. (44), Albert (20, student), Harold (17, student), Nelly (14, student), Theodore (9), and Ruth (6) were listed at 809 W. 3rd Street. Additionally, Nellie Haney (22), a nurse, and Verna Houser (23), a domestic servant, also were listed in their household. The 1913 city directory listed James S. McKee living here and working as president of McKee & Bliven Button Company. His wife Anna, daughter Nellie, and sons Albert S. and Harold J. are also listed here. The only historic photograph identified for the property dates to 1914, and shows that the initial Queen Anne modifications have been completed at this time. Thus, this remodeled appearance reflects the appearance when James McKee lived here.

James McKee and his brother-in-law William Bliven formed the Peerless Button Company around 1895, as the second pearl button company in Muscatine after Boepple's. Since it opened in the former Electric Light and Power Company building, it was unique as having its own electric plant. They produced about 2,500 buttons and 1,500 blanks each week by 1899 ("Pearls and Prosperity" edition, *Muscatine Journal*, 1899). McKee appears to be the primary manager of this business, with financial backing from Bliven who did not live in Muscatine through most of this period. After operating at 315-319 W. Front (Mississippi) for a decade, they launched their namesake business in 1904, the McKee & Bliven Button Company. Bliven did not take an active part in the business until his return from Tacoma, WA in 1906. The company moved to the old Hershey Lumber site soon after, with a new factory building complete and operations started in September 1907 ("James M'Kee is Dead," *Muscatine Journal*, January 22, 1927, 1, 10). This became their permanent location at 1000 Hershey, on the south side of Hershey at the end of Front Street and Elm Street, along the railroad tracks in South Muscatine. By 1911, they

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reportedly employed between 500 and 600 people, and they sold buttons throughout the United States (Sanborn Map Company 1905, 1912; Richman 1911, Vol. 2: 117). William Bliven died in 1915, and the company continued to be run by James S. McKee and his sons Harold and Albert.

By 1916, James S. McKee is listed at 216 W. 3rd Street, where he continued to live until his death in January 1927. This later home of McKee was significantly remodeled into a funeral home after his death, and thus its appearance does not reflect the period that McKee lived here. Thus, the house at 809 W. 3rd Street is best associated with James McKee and this prominent period of his life. James McKee died on January 22, 1927. His obituary noted that he was "the largest individual button manufacturer in the world." His death was announced with a banner headline across the front page, a rarity for obituaries and indication of his prominence. He had continued to be active in the button company until October 1926 when his health began to deteriorate. He was survived by three sons and two daughters: Albert S., J. Harold, Theodore, and Mrs. Edward H. Barry of Muscatine, and Ruth McKee, who lived at home. He was active in and supported the First Congregationalist Church, Knights Templar – 32nd degree, Iowa Lodge No. 2, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Y.M.C.A., and Y.W.C.A. He was on the board of directors of the Muscatine State Bank and Hotel Muscatine. McKee led the movement to convert the old armory building for community purposes, and he was president of the Muscatine Armory company at the time of his death ("James M'Kee is Dead," *Muscatine Journal*, January 22, 1927, 1, 10).

The house at 809 W. 3rd Street was rented briefly in the mid-1910s, with Otto Quandt, a chauffeur for S.G. Stein listed here in 1916. The house is not listed in the 1919 city directory. James's son, Albert S. McKee, married Madeline Willison on March 3, 1916. He had attended the University of Iowa from 1910 to 1912, but returning to Muscatine to join the family pearl button business. He also served in World War I with an engineering division and was overseas for 12 months of his 23-month duty. Albert and Madeline were listed with Albert's family at 216 W. 3rd Street in 1919. The 1920 census lists Albert S. (29) and Madeline (21) McKee renting a house at 905 W. 3rd Street. Albert S. McKee was listed as a traveling salesman for a button company.

By 1921, Albert S. and Madeline McKee were listed as living in the house at 809 W. 3rd Street, though his father James continued to own it. On April 8, 1924, the property was transferred into Albert's name (Lots Book 63: 55). The 1921 and 1923 city directories list Albert S. McKee as working for McKee & Bliven Button Company. On July 1, 1926, the family incorporated the company as the McKee Button Company. James served as president until his death in January 1927, and the eldest son J. Harold took over as president at that time. The city directories continue to list Albert as working for McKee Button Company in the late 1920 and 1930s. Upon the death of his brother in July 1936, Albert S. McKee became head of the McKee Button Company at age 46. The McKee Button Company was profiled in the *Journal* in 1938. It was known as the largest freshwater pearl button factory in the United States. It appears to have continued to only manufacture fresh water shell products at this time, with branches throughout the country and distribution worldwide ("McKee Button Factory is Largest in Nation," *Muscatine Journal*, December 30, 1938, 4). McKee Button Company continues to operate at 1000 Hershey today.

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<u>Smalley-Warfield-McKee House</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Name of Property	County
<u>809 W. 3rd Street</u>	<u>Muscatine</u>
Address	City

Albert S. McKee continued to live at 809 W. 3rd Street until his death on July 10, 1948 at age 58. His obituary noted that he was a member of the National Association of Button Manufacturers, Pearl Button Industries of Iowa, and the National Manufacturers Association. He was also a member of the Arkwright Club of New York City, Chicago Athletic Club, "I" club at the University of Iowa, several local fraternal orders, the Chamber of Commerce, and First Congregationalist Church. He was survived by his wife Madeline and daughter Mrs. Donald Allbee of Davenport ("Albert McKee Dies at 58; Managed Local Button Co.," *Journal*, July 10, 1948, 1). In the 1949 city directory, Madeline McKee was listed here.

Madeline McKee continued to rent it for several years. The 1952 city directory lists Stanley (and Aileen) Fiese at 809 W. 3rd Street. He was the President-Treasurer-Manager of Tilley-Fiese Moteros, Inc. They were not listed here in 1954. The home was rented to a bachelor named Homer Dean in 1954. On March 11, 1960, McKee sold it to Stanley and Aileen Fiese, and then on the same day, the Fieses and Roger and Marie Feldman sold Lot 1 and 2 to Jack and Elizabeth Thatcher (Lots Book 190: 424-426). They then sold Lot 1 to the Blooms, who built the house at 301 Ash. The 1959 city directory already listed the Thatchers at 809 W. 3rd Street, and Jack was the manager of the Vision Center. They continued to own it until 1987.

In 1987, the house was purchased by Ronald and Kay Lynn Hahn McGowan, continuing its association with people in the button industry. Their two sons, William and Philip, and a daughter Sarah lived with them at the time. Many changes were made to the house during their residence, as noted in the description above. The Hahn, Umlandt, and McGowan families have been in the button manufacturing business since 1955. In 1955, William Umlandt and son-in-law Barnard Hahn began the J&K Button Company at 315 W. Front Street, the original location McKee & Bliven's button company. The partners were previously associated with the Automatic Button Company, and this new company never produced pearl buttons. In 1956, they employed about 20 people. They manufactured "Jewel-Kist" buttons in a variety of shapes and colors, particularly for women's clothing. These buttons were made of a heat resistant plastic resin, and thus were durable for home or commercial laundering. William Umlandt continued to serve as the president in 1966 at age 79 (Raffensperger, "The Passing of an Era in Muscatine," *Des Moines Sunday Register*, August 7, 1966, 20; "J. and K. Button Looks Ahead To Bright Future," *Journal*, December 29, 1956, Sec.S, page 8). The company is still run today by the members of the McGowan family, some being in the fourth generation since the company inception.

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Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
State Historical Society of Iowa
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809 W. 3 rd Street	Muscatine
Address	City

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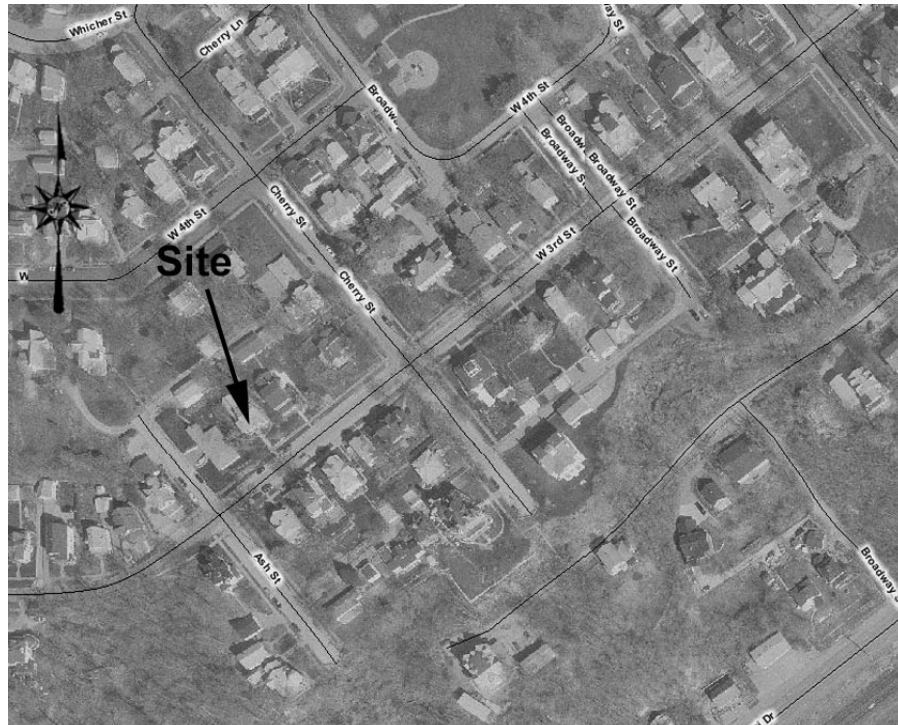
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Location Map



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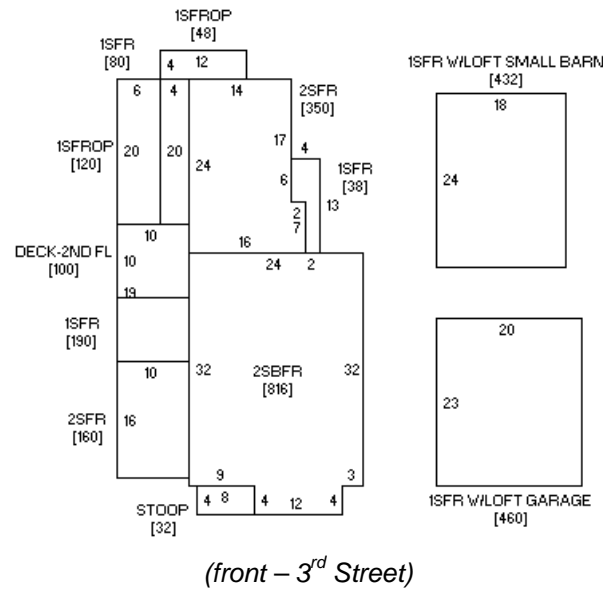
Smalley-Warfield-McKee House
Name of Property

Muscatine
County

809 W. 3rd Street
Address

Muscatine
City

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



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Smalley-Warfield-McKee House
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Historic photograph – c.1914



Muscatine, Iowa, The Pearl City. Muscatine: Record Printing Company, c.1914, page 36.

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Smalley-Warfield-McKee House
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Photographs of building (digital image – January 2006)

