

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

**State Inventory No. 22-01340**  New  Supplemental  
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 22-01381  
 Relationship:  Contributing  Noncontributing  
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries  
 National Register Status:(any that apply)  Listed  De-listed  NHL  DOE  
 9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 Non-Extant (enter year) \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Scovil Building  
 other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 119 South Main Street  
 city or town Elkader  vicinity, county Clayton  
 Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name \_\_\_\_\_ Township No. \_\_\_\_\_ Range No. \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter \_\_\_\_\_ of Quarter \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If Urban) Subdivision Original Town Block(s) Fractional Blk 5 Lot(s) Lot 7

**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<br>Enter number of: | If Eligible Property, enter number of:<br>Contributing      Noncontributing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | _____ buildings                              | <u>1</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>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 Arch. & Hist. Resources of the Elkader Downtown Historic District MPD Historical Architectural Data Base Number 22-030

**6. Function or Use**

| Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions) | Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions) |
|---|--|
| <u>02E Specialty Store</u>                              | <u>02E Specialty Store</u>                             |
| <u>02E08 Barber Shop</u>                                | <u>01B02 Apartment Building</u>                        |
| _____   | _____  |

**7. Description**

| Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions) | Materials (Enter categories from instructions) |
|---|--|
| <u>09F05 Brick Front</u>  | foundation <u>not visible</u>                  |
| _____   | walls <u>03 Brick</u>                          |
| _____   | roof <u>08 Asphalt</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended                       | C Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended                       | D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history. |

County Clayton  
City Elkader

Address 119 South Main Street

Site Number 22-01340  
District Number 22-01381

**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)

02 ARCHITECTURE

05 COMMERCE

**Significant Dates**

Construction date

1892  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 Marlys Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc.

organization City of Elkader

date 7/2011

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telephone 715/469-3300

city or town Sarona

state WI zip code 54870

**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

Page 1

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Scovil Building       | Clayton |
| Name of Property      | County  |
| 119 South Main Street | Elkader |
| Address               | City    |

## 7. Description:

This building is estimated by the Clayton County Assessor to have been built in 1900. Several records suggest the building was built earlier including the 1895 Sanborn Map that shows its current footprint in place. An 1892 newspaper account indicates that the front was being rebuilt following fire damage associated with the 1891 fire in the Mullen Hotel/Farmers Hotel at 109 South Main. It is likely that all or much of the building's front facade post-dates 1891.

The Scovil Building at 119 South Main Street is an example of a Vernacular Brick Front Building that dates from the 1890s. By 2011 the building has had further modifications including modification of the original storefront and conversion into a single-family dwelling. The 2-story building has mottled brown and gray brick walls with a corbeled double course of stretcher brick along the parapet and a single course between levels the only ornamentation. The storefront was renovated in 1974 during conversion of the building to residential use. Random white brick and rectangular limestone pieces on the wall surrounding a new pair of doors and small 1/1 double-hung window. Paired entrances to each level are at the right edge and a narrow band of wood shake shingles separates the two levels This entrance is recessed between two asymmetrical shop windows. Entrances to the upper level continue to be located at the outer edges of the building.

## 8. Significance:

The Scovil Building at 119 South Main Street is an example of a modified Vernacular Brick Front Building that dates from the 1890s. Despite its alterations, it retains its original massing and scale making it a contributing resource in the Elkader Downtown Historic District. The district derives significance under both Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the district's commercial buildings are associated with the historic contexts developed for the downtown in the "Architectural and Historical Resources of the Elkader Downtown Historic District" Multiple Property Documentation form covering the years 1846 to 1960. Under Criterion C, portions of the building's vernacular form are representative of the turn of the century building boom in the downtown.

### *Elkader Downtown Historic District Background:*

The town of Elkader was laid out in 1846 along the banks of the Turkey River approximately 16 miles upstream from the Turkey River's confluence with the Mississippi River. The town was surveyed and laid out in 1846 with the Original Town Plat filed in June 22, 1846 by Timothy Davis, Chester Sage and John Thompson, friends and business partners, who began operating a sawmill on North Front (Main) Street in 1845 before the town was even platted. By 1849 they had a successful flour mill in operation. The new town was named for Abd el-Kader, an Algerian freedom fighter and world figure who was admired by Davis. The principal building stimulating development in the 1840s and 1850s was the Elkader Mill. After 1860 when the Clayton County voters selected Elkader as the permanent county seat, the downtown saw a variety of merchants set up shops, several hotels open, a number of newspapers begin publication, and small manufacturing concerns get underway in the city center. Elkader numbered 440 residents in 1860.

The new county court house saw its first section completed in 1869 opposite the downtown. New limestone buildings were erected along both North and South Main Street with public halls frequently

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 2

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Scovil Building       | Clayton |
| Name of Property      | County  |
| 119 South Main Street | Elkader |
| Address               | City    |

located on upper floors. During the 1870s and 1880s 2-story brick buildings began replacing frame business houses. A permanent railroad connection was completed by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul RR in 1886 but service remained poor as Elkader was located at the end of a spur rather than along a main line route. A more important transportation improvement during the 1880s was the completion of the Keystone Bridge across the Turkey River in 1880. Its completion prompted a period of economic vitality and community investment. The community was officially incorporated two years later in 1891 and a new waterworks system and city well were completed in 1896. Electricity was rejected by locals until the end of the decade in 1900, however. In the meantime, new churches were built in 1897 for the Congregationalists on the east side of the river and in 1897-1899 for the Catholics on the west side of the river. Coupled with a series of major fires during the 1890s, the downtown saw a period of rebuilding with a new hotel and bank at the entrance to the business district at the turn of the century. The new opera house was completed on North Main Street while other 2 and 3-story brick blocks appeared both north and south of Bridge Street.

By 1900, Elkader's population stood at its peak of 1,321 – an increase of 77 percent during the decade of the 1890s. Development continued in the downtown before and after World War I but at a much slower pace. Floods and fires damaged the Elkader Mill in 1902, 1906 and 1908, but it was nevertheless rebuilt by Schmidt Brothers & Co., retaining a key employer and anchor for Elkader's downtown. The business district began to extend to the west before and after the war with the principal changes seen along West Bridge Street. Here livery stables and wagon shops were replaced by automobile dealerships, implement companies and filling stations. Five stations eventually located along West Bridge with a sixth one block to the south along First Street SW. The national economic depression of the 1930s was coupled by the closing of the Elkader Mill in 1939 following a major fire. Natural disasters after World War I included major floods in 1922, 1947, and 1958 with a tornado destroying section of South Main Street in 1958 as well.

Despite these natural and human made disasters, Elkader saw steady but modest population growth from 1,223 in 1920 to 1,526 in 1960. The impact of the automobile was seen in traffic patterns, parking patterns, and traffic signs and the introduction of electricity saw several generations of street lighting come and go. The popularity of the opera house waned and the first floor became the municipal fire station while two movie houses came and one stayed in the downtown drawing evening crowds for entertainment and shopping. As many as 130 people resided in downtown flats during this period. A good system of inter and intra-state highways connected Elkader and its downtown to other parts of the state and country in a way that railroads had never served the community. By 1960, downtown Elkader was well-established as one of several geographically dispersed retail centers serving Clayton County. Virtually every storefront was filled with start-up businesses or multi-generational family stores as Elkader's downtown achieved a stable and healthy status for local and countywide residents.

### *Historic Background for the Scovil Building at 119 South Main Street:*

The Scovil Building at 119 South Main Street was acquired in December 1892 by Albert Scovil from Nick and Mary Jane Finnegan. The Finnegans completed a renovation of the building after a fire in the previous Mullen Hotel in June 1891 damaged nearby structures. Scovil held the building until December 1900. In 1895, the Sanborn Map published that year shows the building used as a restaurant. The building continued this use on the 1902 Sanborn Map. It was transferred to Minnie Berg and her husband in 1903 and retained by them until 1917 when it was sold to William C. Reimer.

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 3

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Scovil Building       | Clayton |
| Name of Property      | County  |
| 119 South Main Street | Elkader |
| Address               | City    |

He held it briefly selling it in 1920 to Charles Pulfer who resold it to Michael Garaghty in 1920. In 1965, Michael sold it to Joseph and Ruth Garaghty who completed a residential conversion for both floors in 1974. The continued to hold it until 1979 when it was sold to Realto and Joyce Kuehl who also owned the building next door at 117 South Main Street. Gene and Judy Vigen acquired the building from the Kuehls in 1993 and continue to own and reside there in 2011.

## 9. Major Sources:

- 1984 History of Clayton County.* Clayton County Genealogical Society, Elkader, Iowa: Griffith Press, 1984.
- Anderson, David C. *Reconnaissance Survey of Elkader Clayton County, Iowa.* Clayton County Historic Preservation Commission and Main Street Elkader, March 1, 1994.
- Andreas, A.T. *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa.* Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875.
- Appraisal Records for Elkader Downtown Properties, Clayton County Assessor's Office, 1949 – 1965.
- "Bird's Eye View Map, Elkader, Iowa, 1871." Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Doniat and Zastrow.
- Elkader Historical Society/Carter House Museum research file for 119 South Main Street; files focusing on downtown Elkader buildings, businesses, civic leaders and related information. Compiled by Marge Costigan and other museum volunteers. Research files contain hundreds of historic photos, newspaper articles, publication transcriptions, property ownership records, and information from interviews. Digital copies of some research files were loaned to Marlys Svendsen, October 2010 and others were made available in March 2011 for duplication.
- Census of State of Iowa* for the years 1856, 1867, 1875, 1885, 1895, 1905, 1915, and 1925 as printed by various State Printers.
- Clayton County, Iowa, Memories & Heritage from the Photo Albums of Clayton County.* Elkader, Iowa: The Clayton County Register, 1997.
- Downtown Building Survey (73 surveyed buildings) records including survey questionnaires, draft Iowa Site Inventory Forms and digital photographs. Main Street Elkader, 2009.
- Downtown Elkader Business Questionnaires completed by property/business owners, 2010.
- Downtown Elkader Individual Property Site Maps compiled by Eli Garms, Clayton County GIS, Engineer's Office, Elkader, November 2010.
- Elkader Building Survey (62 surveyed buildings). Main Street Elkader, 1994-1996.
- Elkader Historic Photograph Collection (digital). Elkader Public Library, Elkader. Digital files loaned to Marlys Svendsen, December 2008.

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number 22-01340  
Related District Number 22-01381

Page 4

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|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Scovil Building       | Clayton |
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"Elkader, Iowa 1846-1971, the Past, the Present the Future." 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, *The Clayton County Register*, Elkader, Iowa, July 21, 1971.

Elkader Telephone Directories, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1932, 1933, 1960 and 1966.

Gottfried, Herbert and Jan Jennings. *American Vernacular Design, 1870-1940*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1985.

Insurance Maps for Elkader. (New York: The Sanborn Company), 1895, 1902, 1913, 1930, and 1951.

"Keystone Bridge Centennial Edition." *The Clayton County Register*, Elkader, Iowa, July 26, 1989.

"Kleinpell's Hardware." *The Elkader Register*, September 10, 1925.

Olson, Edward W. *Look What you Started Mr. Davis...Elkader, Iowa: History, Facts and Folklore about Elkader, Iowa U.S.A.*, ca. 2010.

*Plat Book of Clayton County, Iowa*, Minneapolis: Warner & Foote, 1886.

"Pages from the Past", *Clayton County Register*, June 19, 2001

"Plat of Elkader, June 22, 1846." Recorder's Office, Clayton County, Court House, Elkader, Iowa,.

Powell, Harry. "The Elkader Story." unpublished first draft, December 1980; copy available at Elkader Public Library.

Price, Realto E., editor. *History of Clayton County, Iowa from the Earliest historical Times Down to the Present, Volumes I and II*. Chicago: Robert O. Law Company, 1916.

Property Transfer Records for Blocks 3 – 10 and Fractional Blocks 3-6 in Town of Elkader, Clayton County Auditor's Office and Recorder's Office, Clayton County Court House, Elkader, Iowa.

Shank, Wesley I. *Iowa's Historic Architects: A Biographical Dictionary*. Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1999.

*Standard Atlas of Clayton County, Iowa*. Chicago: George A. Ogle & Co., 1902.

United States Census, 1850-2010. (population figures provided by State Library of Iowa, January 2011 and City of Elkader, March 2011).

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number 22-01340  
Related District Number 22-01381

Page 5

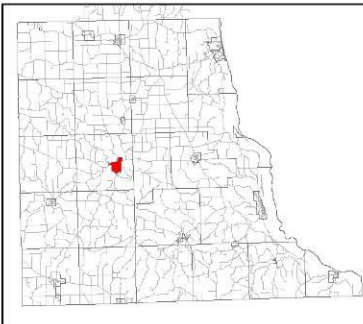
Scovil Building  
Name of Property  
119 South Main Street  
Address

Clayton  
County  
Elkader  
City

**Additional Information:**

Full Legal Description: Original Town of Elkader, Lot 7, Fractional Block 5 (southeast parcel)

**Address: 119 South Main**



Map Created By:  
Eli Garms  
Clayton County GIS  
2010

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State Historical Society of Iowa  
**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number 22-01340  
Related District Number 22-01381

Page 6

Scovil Building  
Name of Property  
119 South Main Street  
Address

Clayton  
County  
Elkader  
City

**Photograph:** Historic view, 119 South Main Street, looking south, ca. 1915 (Elkader Historical Society/Carter House Museum Collection).





Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number 22-01340  
Related District Number 22-01381

Page 7

Scovil Building  
Name of Property  
119 South Main Street  
Address

Clayton  
County  
Elkader  
City



**Photographs:** 119 South Main Street, looking east, and street view, looking east, and, bottom, looking west at rear façade that overlooks the Turkey River (Elkader Downtown Survey Photograph, 10/29/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer)

