

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

**State Inventory No. 22-01580**  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 Michael Bente Implement Building

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 110 Mulberry Street SW

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) 5 Lot(s) SW 1/2 of NE 1/2 LOT 5 & SW Part of NE 1/2 Lot 6

**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)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

*If Non-Eligible Property*  
 Enter number of:

\_\_\_\_\_ buildings  
 \_\_\_\_\_ sites  
 \_\_\_\_\_ structures  
 \_\_\_\_\_ objects  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Total

*If Eligible Property, enter number of:*  
 Contributing Noncontributing

1 \_\_\_\_\_ buildings  
 \_\_\_\_\_ sites  
 \_\_\_\_\_ structures  
 \_\_\_\_\_ objects  
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*  
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)

02A07 Implement Dealer

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

10G01 Industrial Storage/Warehouse

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

09F02 Broad Front

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation 16 Clay Tile

walls 16 Clay Tile

roof 08 Asphalt

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
- Yes  No  More Research Recommended
- Yes  No  More Research Recommended
- 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 Clayton  
City Elkader

Address 110 Mulberry Street SW

Site Number 22-01580  
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)

05 COMMERCE

**Significant Dates**

Construction date

1930

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

street & number N3834 Deep Lake Road

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

Michael Bente Implement Building	Clayton
Name of Property	County
110 Mulberry Street SW	Elkader
Address	City

## 7. Description:

This building is estimated by the Clayton County Assessor to have been built in 1940. The June 1930 Sanborn Map shows the implement building in place making its construction date sometime prior to that date and confirming newspaper accounts of its construction and completion near that time. Property transfer records show the property transferring to Michael Bente in April 1930 further confirming a construction date of 1930.

As originally constructed, the Michael Bente Implement Building at 110 Mulberry Street SW was an example of a vernacular Broad Front 2-story commercial form built for use as a offices, repair shops and parts warehouse. The building footprint is 30 feet wide by 90 feet deep. It is constructed of mottled brown colored "Matt Faced Mason City Load Bearing Tile." It originally had a multi-stepped parapet across the front but now has a reduced height, level parapet with metal coping. The front façade has been altered with infill of most of the original openings with concrete block though the size and location of these openings remains intact. They included a pair and single 1/1 double-hung units to the left and right of the centered entrance, respectively, and an overhead door further to the right for a drive-through line inside the building's repair bay and showroom. On the upper level, two 1/1 double-hung windows flanked a wide space reserved for advertising signage. All of the openings except the entrance door and one double-hung window to the right of the entrance have been infilled; the entrance has a replacement metal door. The long exposed sidewall on the west retains its original unpainted tile finish and the front façade has been painted a single color obscuring the infill pattern. Fenestration on the west façade includes a series of original double-hung openings now infilled with concrete block and small two-light windows. Some of the changes may be the result of the 1958 tornado.

## 8. Significance:

The Michael Bente Implement Building at 110 Mulberry Street SW is a poorly preserved example of a utilitarian 2-story Broad Front building constructed for use as an implement dealership and repair shop in 1930. Despite changes in openings and the parapet, the building retains its original plan, scale and massing with most of the original tile construction intact and highly visible. Combined with its historical use, the building retains its position as a contributing resource in the historic district under Criterion A. The district itself derives significance under both Criteria A and C. Under these criteria, 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.

### *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

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 2

Michael Bente Implement Building	Clayton
Name of Property	County
110 Mulberry Street SW	Elkader
Address	City

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 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.

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 3

Michael Bente Implement Building	Clayton
Name of Property	County
110 Mulberry Street SW	Elkader
Address	City

### *Historic Background for the Michael Bente Implement Building at 110 Mulberry Street SW:*

The Michael Bente Implement Building at 110 Mulberry Street SW was built in the spring and summer of 1930 to house the growing agricultural implement and repair business of Michael Bente. The business was established in 1924 when Bente moved to Elkader and started a tractor sales business. Beginning in 1928, Bente moved his business to the Reimer Building and then in 1929 to the former New Home Lumber Company Building (nonextant), both on West Bridge Street. When the lumber company building was sold to allow construction of a new Wardell Chevrolet dealership on the site at 109 West Bridge Street, Bente made the decision to build his own building nearby. The site selected formerly held the Wareham-Gleason livery stable. The Bente Implement Building originally held offices on the first floor with room for a drive-through lane, repair shop and implement showroom with a freight elevator serving three levels. The upper level held additional display space and parts storage. Bente handled John Deere and Oliver implement franchises

Property Transfer records show that Michael Bente and his wife Rose sold the building in 1942 to J.B. Donlon. In 1955 it was transferred by Donlon to Edwin L. Hyde. During these years the building reportedly held a heating and plumbing business and an electrical business. In 1965 the building was sold by Hyde to the Elkader Wire and Display Manufacturing Company, which occupied adjacent buildings in Block 5. After the business closed, it passed to Adam Pollock and Leslie Schiller in 2005, owners who have reused the building and others along West Bridge Street as manufacturing and warehouse space for Fire Farm, a lighting fixture manufacturing business, and retail shops.

### **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 files focusing on downtown Elkader buildings, businesses, civic leaders and related information and a research file for 110 Mulberry Street SW. 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.

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 4

Michael Bente Implement Building	Clayton
Name of Property	County
110 Mulberry Street SW	Elkader
Address	City

*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 resources). Main Street Elkader, 1994-1996.

Elkader Historic Photograph Collection (digital). Elkader Public Library, Elkader. Digital files loaned to Marlys Svendsen, December 2008.

"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.

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 5

---

Michael Bente Implement Building	Clayton
Name of Property	County
110 Mulberry Street SW	Elkader
Address	City

---

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, provided by State Library of Iowa and the City of Elkader.

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

Site Number 22-01580  
Related District Number 22-01381

Page 6

Michael Bente Implement Building  
Name of Property  
110 Mulberry Street SW  
Address

Clayton  
County  
Elkader  
City

**Additional Information:**

Full Legal Description: Original Town of Elkader, SW ½ of NE ½ LOT 5 & SW Part of NE ½ Lot 6 BLK 5

**Address: 110 Mulberry Street SW**



Map Created By:  
Eli Garms  
Clayton County GIS  
2010



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

Site Number 22-01580  
Related District Number 22-01381

Page 7

Michael Bente Implement Building  
Name of Property  
110 Mulberry Street SW  
Address

Clayton  
County  
Elkader  
City



**Photographs:** Historic views, M. Bente Implement Building near completion photo, 110 Mulberry Street SW, looking north, 1930, and undated ca. 1990 view, looking north with Bente Implement on left side (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 22-01580  
Related District Number 22-01381

Page 8

Michael Bente Implement Building  
Name of Property  
110 Mulberry Street SW  
Address

Clayton  
County  
Elkader  
City

**Photographs:** 110 Mulberry Street SW, looking northeast and street view, looking northwest (Elkader Downtown Survey Photograph, 10/29/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer)

