

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

State Inventory No. 22-01731 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 Schmidt, Fred and Anna House
 other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 215 Main Street NW
 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) 3 Lot(s) Lot 1

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 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>01A DOMESTIC/Single Dwelling</u>	<u>01B01 DOMESTIC/Duplex</u>
_____	<u>01C04 Storage Shed</u>
_____	_____

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)	Materials (Enter categories from instructions)
<u>09A02 Gable-Front-and-Wing</u>	foundation <u>03 Brick; 04C Stone/limestone</u>
<u>09D02 Gable Roof</u>	walls <u>03 Brick; 05 Metal</u>
_____	roof <u>08A 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 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended	D Property yields significant information in archaeology or history.

County Clayton
City Elkader

Address 215 North Main St

Site Number 22-01731
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)

27 RELIGION
02 ARCHITECTURE

Significant Dates

Construction date
1885 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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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: _____

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7. Description:

This house was estimated to have been built in 1900 according to the Clayton County Assessor. Sanborn Maps suggest that it was constructed prior to publication of the 1895 map. A similar footprint is also shown on the 1886 Plat Map of Elkader. Property transfer records show the property passing through a tax sale deed in 1880 suggesting there was no building present at the time. Six years later it was transferred to Fred Schmidt by his uncle and father. This transfer took place two years after Fred and his first wife were married. The design and material for the retaining wall suggest that it was constructed by the Schmidt family that owned and operated the limestone Elkader Mill. These facts suggest that the house was built closer to ca.1885 than to 1900. It is also possible that an interior inspection may identify construction features that date the building several decades later. The suggested construction year of 1885 remains to be confirmed.

The Schmidt House at 215 North Main Street is an example of a vernacular Hipped-Roof, 2-story residential form. It has a limestone foundation and wide clapboard-style metal siding on the walls. The house has an L-shaped plan with low-pitched hipped roof main block and a shallow, low-pitched wing on the north side. The eaves are shallow and devoid of brackets. The house has a flat-roofed porch that spans the full front. The porch retains its original turned posts at the outer corners and centered entrance with a balustrade of turned spindles. The decking has been replaced with a concrete deck and foundation. The frieze has been covered but likely originally included spindles. The small Queen Anne porch brackets remain in place.

Fenestration includes 1/1 double-hung windows in various sizes. On the front façade the entrance is one the right with a feature window – a cottage window – to the left. The upper sash has a geometric patterned leaded light design. On the south façade, a hipped roof angular bay window is present with the center face featuring a cottage window and the side faces containing 1/1 double-hung units. On the upper level of the house, 1/1 double-hung windows are widely spaced. On the front, a door to the porch roof is flanked by such windows. The house has a detached garage that is considered noncontributing because of its age.

8. Significance:

The Schmidt House at 215 North Main Street is one of only four extant residences in the Elkader Downtown Historic District. The district derives significance under both Criteria A and C. Under Criterion A, the district's 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. In this case, the Schmidt House is associated with one of the members of the second generation of Schmidt family members who operated the Elkader Mill from 1891 until it closed in 1939. Under Criterion C, the house is a contributing resource because it is an example of an intact Hipped Roof, 2-story residence that is typical of the late 19th century in residential areas on the edge of the Elkader Downtown Historic District.

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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 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

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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 Schmidt House at 215 North Main Street:

This residence was likely constructed sometime between 1885 and 1895. The property was acquired by brothers J.P. and Wolfgang Schmidt in 1880 when a sheriff's deed was conveyed on the parcel. At the time the Schmidt Brothers owned and operated the Elkader Mill, which was located about a block south of the property on the opposite side of North Main Street. The mill was a prosperous and important Elkader business during the 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1891 J.P. and Wolfgang Schmidt transferred the mill to their sons Fred H. and brother Christian (Wolfgang's sons) and Robert (J.P.'s son).

A few years before the mill was transferred, the Schmidt brothers transferred the house site to Wolfgang's son Fred. This transfer was done two years after Fred married Mary Meisner. It is likely the couple constructed this house at that time since it appears on the 1886 Warner and Foote Plat Map of Elkader. Five years later in 1891 the same year the mill was transferred, Fred's first wife Mary Schmidt died.

The following brief biography of Fred Schmidt was compiled in 1894.

"Fred H. Schmidt is a member of the firm of Schmidt Bros., proprietors of the rolling mills of Elkader, who have succeeded in building up a large general and local trade. Our subject is an enterprising and progressive young business man, being numbered among the leading citizens of this thriving town. He is a native of Clayton County, having been born in Read Township, in 1863; he has passed his entire life in this region, and is identified in every respect with its welfare.

The subject of this narrative is a son of Wolfgang and Paulina (Thoma) Schmidt. The father is a native of Germany, and many years ago left the Fatherland, coming to America and making a settlement in Clayton County in the early days of its history. He owned and improved a good farm in Read Township, and has long been numbered among the patriotic citizens of his adopted land. Fred H. received a good common-school education in the public schools near his home, and later attended those of Elkader. On commencing the active duties of life he went into partnership with his father and uncle, J.B. Schmidt. The firm name is now Schmidt Bros. & Co., including himself, brother Christian and cousin Robert.

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In the roller mills in which our subject is interested may be found the latest improved machinery used in the trade. The mills are run by water power and turn out upwards of one hundred and twenty-five barrels of flour per day. Their reputation is constantly growing and is an enviable one, as they turn out the best quality of flour, which is uniformly good. They make a specialty of three brands, which are known as the "Acme," "Pansy Blossom" and "Extra Bakers." Farmers from all parts of this and adjoining counties bring their wheat to this mill to be ground, as universal satisfaction is guaranteed, and the proprietors, who are courteous and obliging, have their customers' interests at heart and meet their demands as far as possible.

The marriage of Mr. Schmidt occurred in 1884, when Miss Mary Meisner became his bride. She was a daughter of Edward Meisner, one of the early settlers of this county. Mrs. Schmidt, who was educated and grew to womanhood within the boundaries of Clayton County, was called from this life in September, 1891, leaving a little son, Erwin. She was a faithful and consistent member of the Lutheran Church, to which Mr. Schmidt also belongs, and was a lady who won the friendship and love of all who were thrown in contact with her.

Politically Mr. Schmidt is identified with the Democratic party, to which he gives his active support. He comes of sturdy German stock, and in his own life has manifested many of their characteristics of industry, perseverance and business sagacity. He has become well-to-do through the exercise of these qualities, and is rapidly laying by a snug little fortune, though he has not been engaged in business for many years. He is a man of intelligence and wide information, being particularly devoted to self improvement and study, and makes a point of keeping thoroughly posted on the affairs of the day. He numbers many warm friends in this locality, and not the least among these are his customers." (*Portrait and Biographical Record of Dubuque, Jones and Clayton Counties*, 1894, pp. 385-386)

Sometime after 1894, Fred remarried, and in 1944, ownership in the house was officially recorded in the names of both Fred and his second wife, Anna. In 1952, the property passed from Anna Schmidt to Marie Wahls et.al. From the 1960s to the 1980s the property was held by a series of owners that included Lois and Edwin Dettman, Gerald and Sharon Taylor, and Alfred and Charlotte Kramer. In 2003 the property passed to Howard and Maxine Kuehl along with Alfred Kramer. The following year, Maxine Kuehl became the sole owner. She continues to hold and occupy the house as a private residence 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.

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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 215 North 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.

"Elkader, Iowa 1846-1971, the Past, the Present the Future." 125th 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.

Grau, Ruth. *History of Peach Church*, undated.

Griffith, Katherine. "Elkader Opera House." Elkader, Iowa: Elkader Main Street, ca. 1992.

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

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

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.

“Plat of Elkader, June 22, 1846.” Recorder’s Office, Clayton County, Court House, Elkader, Iowa,.

Portrait and Biographical Record of Dubuque, Jones and Clayton Counties. Chicago: Chapman Publishing Co., 1894.

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).

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Additional Information:

Full Legal Description: Original Town of Elkader, Lot 1, Block 3.

Address: 215 North Main



Map Created By:
Eli Garms
Clayton County GIS
2010

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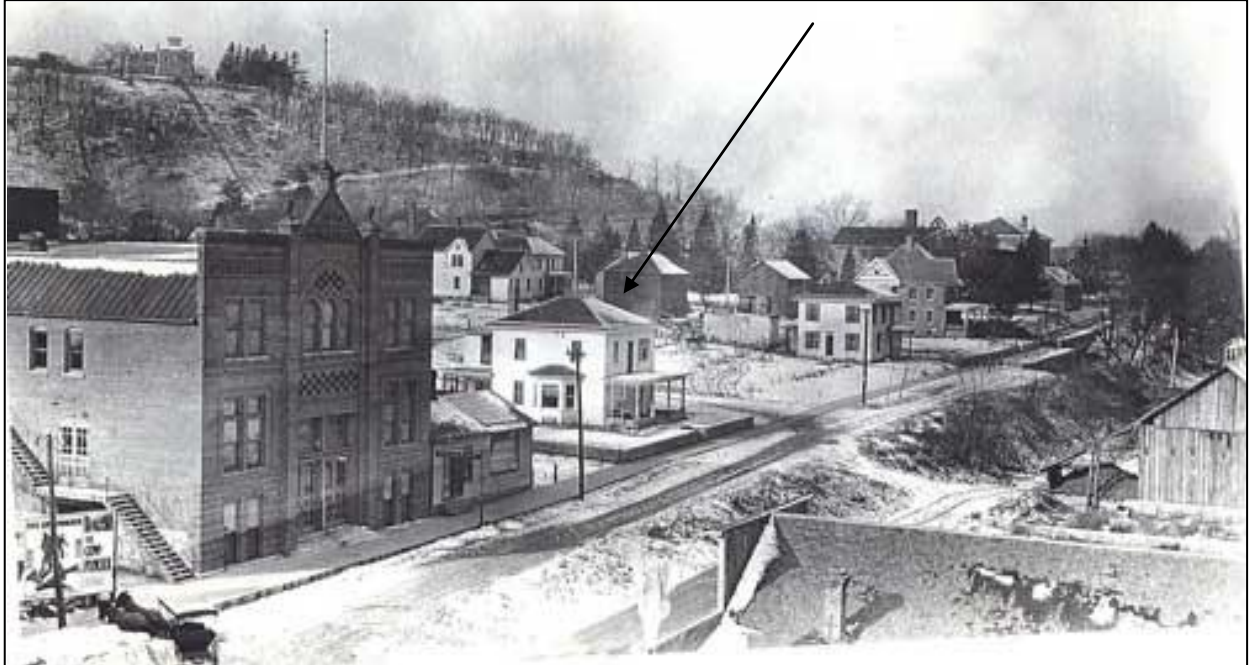
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Photographs: Historic view, 215 North Main Street, looking northwest (Elkader Public Library Digital Photograph Collection).



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Photographs; 215 North Main Street, looking southwest and northwest (Elkader Downtown Survey Photographs, 9/16/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer)



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Photographs; 215 North Main Street, looking south southwest (Elkader Downtown Survey Photographs, 9/16/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer)

