

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

**State Inventory No. 22-00277**  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 Kleinpell & Schmidt Hardware Store Building

other names/site number E.G. Rolf Building, Snedigar and Stearns Building, Falkenhainer & Kenkel Building; Schera's Restaurant

**2. Location**

street & number 107 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 4

**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)

02F01 COMMERCE/general store

02E05 COMMERCE/hardware store

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

02G Restaurant

01B02 Apartment Building

**7. Description**

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

09F05 Brick Front

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation 04 Stone

walls 04 Stone; 03 Brick (vener)

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 107 South Main Street

Site Number 22-00277  
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  
1891  check if circa or estimated date  
Other dates  
1853; 1891

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

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Kleinpell & Schmidt Hardware Store Building	Clayton
Name of Property	County
107 South Main Street	Elkader
Address	City

## 7. Description:

This building is estimated by the Clayton County Assessor to have been built in 1870. Newspaper accounts indicate that this building was first constructed in 1853 in time for receiving goods from the first and only steamboat delivery in 1854. The building was remodeled after a fire in an adjacent building in the summer of 1891.

The Kleinpell & Schmidt Hardware Store Building at 107 South Main Street is an example of a vernacular Elkader Limestone Block commercial building from the 1850s that was subsequently modified with a new roof profile (low pitched hipped roof) and cornice (nonextant), the addition of a brick veneer on the front façade, and a new storefront giving the building a Brick Front design. This 2-story rectangular building is 69 feet wide by 79 feet deep with carport addition at rear extending towards the Turkey River. The building was originally built for a cost of \$6,500 with a Front-Gable Elkader Limestone Block form. The building suffered major fire damage in June 1891 when an adjacent building burned. The limestone walls were left largely undamaged. Improvements following the fire included the installation of a flat roof, brick veneer on the front façade, an embossed metal cornice (nonextant) and substantial interior work. The building takes its historic name for this site form from the ownership of Kleinpell & Schmidt that began with the rebuilding of the structure during the summer of 1891.

By 2011 the building has had further modifications including the removal of the embossed metal cornice, installation of a plain brick parapet, and changes to the storefront. The building's north stone wall is parged and painted as is the first floor cut stone wall sections to either side of the storefront. The upper level of the front façade has a dark reddish-brown colored brick laid in running bond with the three segmental arched windows fitted with a double course of header brick projecting from the wall. The outer windows retain their 1/1 double-hung units but the inner window pair have been replaced with single-light sash. On the first floor, the storefront has cast iron columns with plate glass windows and transoms for the display windows. The north display window has been altered by the removal of the lower bulkhead and installation of a door leading to the upper level. The rear walls have multi-light double-hung windows looking out over the Turkey River. A small balcony with a wrought-iron railing is at the north end.

## 8. Significance:

The Kleinpell & Schmidt Hardware Store Building at 107 South Main Street is an example of an early vernacular Elkader Limestone Block commercial building that was damaged by fire in the 1890s but retained and updated with a turn of the century design. It now occupies an important site along South Main Street with its original exposed stone walls on the north and east facades, re-exposed following the demolition of the three adjacent buildings in the 1970s. This early hardware store is 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 (north and rear facades) are representative of the earliest form of building in the downtown – limestone commercial buildings that appeared between the 1840s and 1870s in the downtown.

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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 come and go. The popularity of the opera house waned and the first floor became the municipal fire

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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 Kleinpell & Schmidt Hardware Store Building at 107 South Main Street:*

The Kleinpell & Schmidt Hardware Store Building at 107 South Main Street was originally erected in 1853 according to various newspaper accounts when the property was owned by E.G. Rolf. He operated a general store from the property, proudly advertising and selling goods from the first and only load of merchandise ever delivered to Elkader up the Turkey River in October 1854 (*Garnavillo Herald*, February 23, 1855). A year later in September 1855 Rolf hosted a "grand ball" in the upper level hall of his building during the Elkader fair (*Garnavillo Herald*, September 21, 1855). Some newspaper accounts and historic speculations suggest that the hall space and/or the lower level was used as Clayton County courthouse space during the years 1856-57 and 1860-64 when the county seat was in Elkader but before the new court house was finished.

In 1864 the building was sold to Fielding Snedigar and C.F. Stearns who operated a general store advertising hardware, stoves and tin on the building front during the period they owned the building. It was sold to Snedigar's sons four years later. One of the sons, James, was a veteran of the Civil War and letters he wrote to his family are featured in Ed Olson's 2010 memoir, *Look What you Started Mr. Davis...Elkader, Iowa: History, Facts and Folklore about Elkader, Iowa U.S.A.* For health reasons, James and his family left Elkader in 1880 to relocate in Florida. The building passed to hardware merchants Falkenheiner and Kenkel. By 1887, W.F. Kleinpell was named manager of the store, a position he would hold for more than 50 years.

In June 1891 the first of a series of important fires along Main Street occurred in the Mullen Hotel located on South Main Street. The limestone building at 107 South Main Street occupied by Kleinpell and Schmidt Hardware Store at the time sustained more than \$4,000 in losses to the building and goods. By the end of June, the decision of owners Falkenheiner and Kenkel had been made to rebuild the damaged portions of the building including the roof and front façade. Following the completion of this work in September 1891, the property was transferred to John Schmidt and W.F. Kleinpell along with the hardware stock for \$2,000. Construction plans proceed under the direction of Kleinpell and Schmidt. Among the improvements reported during September 1891 in the local paper was the installation of an elevator and the addition of plate glass display windows. The remodeled hardware store reopened in October 1891.

The hardware store continued at this location for more than 40 years eventually becoming known as Kleinpell Hardware Store. By the 1920s, Kleinpell's was known for its plumbing contract work as well as the tin shop work carried out on the upper level and a substantial furnace and steam heating contract business. In the 1930s the firm also added installation of air condition system to their trade. After W.F. Kleinpell died, the building passed to his daughter Lulu Murphy in 1943. His granddaughter Kathleen Murphy briefly operated a gift shop here, reportedly the first in Elkader. In 1944, the building

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was leased by Kathleen to Kenneth Newbern who re-established a hardware store here. He operated it until 1960.

In 1961 the building was sold to Dwayne Vorwald who leased space to a restaurant and a shoe store for a few years. In 1965, the building was transferred to Earl Patrick who opened Patrick's Tavern and Café. He operated the business from this location until 1991 when it was sold to Keith and Kay Knospe who operated the Keystone Restaurant here until they sold the building to Lanny Kuehl. In 2006 it was acquired by Brian Bruening who opened Schera's Restaurant, the business at this location 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 107 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.

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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.

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  
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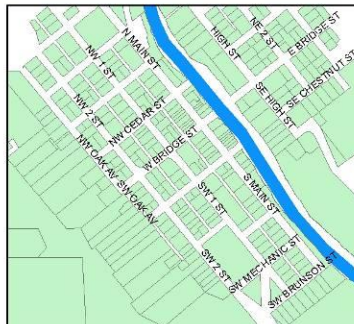
Kleinpell & Schmidt Hardware Store Building  
Name of Property  
107 South Main Street  
Address

Clayton  
County  
Elkader  
City

**Additional Information:**

Full Legal Description: Original Town of Elkader, Lot 4, Fractional Block 5 (northwest half of parcel outlined in yellow).

**Address: 107 South Main**



Map Created By:  
Eli Garms  
Clayton County GIS  
2010

Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs  
State Historical Society of Iowa  
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**Photographs:** Historic views, top – 107 South Main Street, before June 1891 fire in nearby Mullen Hotel damaged building, looking southeast; bottom – 107 South Main Street before cornice was removed, ca. 1940s (Elkader Public Library Historical Photograph Collection)



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**Photographs:** 107 South Main Street, looking north east and east at storefront (Elkader Downtown Survey Photograph, 10/29/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer)



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**Photographs:** 107 South Main Street, looking west at rear façade overlooking the Turkey River (Elkader Downtown Survey Photograph, 10/29/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer)

