

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

**State Inventory No. 22-01384**  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 Koehn House  
 other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Location**

street & number 108 First 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) 4 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 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 108 First St. NW

Site Number 22-01384  
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

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

---

Koehn House	Clayton
Name of Property	County
108 First Street NW	Elkader
Address	City

---

## 7. Description:

This house was estimated to have been built in 1900 according to the Clayton County Assessor. Sanborn Maps show that it was constructed prior to publication of the 1895 map. The house's form and detailing are consistent with a date of ca. 1895.

The Koehn House at 108 First Street NW is an example of a vernacular Gable-Front-and-Wing residential form. It has a limestone foundation and mottled reddish-brown brick walls on the front-gable 2-story wing and medium-width clapboard-style synthetic siding on the 1-story side-gable wing. The house has an L-shaped plan with steep pitch on the front-gable wing and low-pitch on the side-gable wing. The eaves are moderately deep and the cornice wide. A hipped-roof porch spans the front façade of the front-gable wing with a pediment at the right side opposite the entrance. Turned porch posts support the roof with a spindled frieze and small scroll-cut brackets along the roof. The right-hand ell also contains a small hipped roof porch that leads to a second entrance. It has matching posts and frieze detailing.

Fenestration includes two 1/1 double-hung windows with segmental soldier brick arches and stone sills on each level of the brick section and a single 1/1 double-hung window to the right of the entrance in the 1-story frame wing. A semi-circular fanlight window with four lights is located in the front-gable peak with the arch formed by a double-row of rowlock brick and corbeled row of headers. The gable peak has its original ornamentation consisting of scroll-cut and spindled elements. The house has no garage but a large 50x60 foot metal storage shed is located at the rear of the property along the alley. Built in 1977, the building is considered non contributing.

## 8. Significance:

The Koehn House at 108 First Street NW 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. Under Criterion C, the building is a contributing resource as an example of an intact Gable-Front and Wing residence that preserves Queen Anne design elements typical of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in residential areas on the edge of the Elkader Downtown Historic District.

### *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

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

Page 2

---

Koehn House	Clayton
Name of Property	County
108 First Street NW	Elkader
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---

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

Site Number 22-01384  
Related District Number 22-01381

Page 3

---

Koehn House	Clayton
Name of Property	County
108 First Street NW	Elkader
Address	City

---

*Historic Background for the Koehn House at 108 First Street NW:*

This residence was likely constructed in ca. 1885. The building appears on the 1886 Map of Elkader published by Warner and Foote in the *Plat Book of Clayton County*. According to property transfer records, the Koehn family owned the property at the time. In 1897 Julia Koehn transferred the property but subsequent records show Henry Koehn continuing to own the property until 1929. At that time it was sold to August Meier who held it until his death in 1944 when it was transferred to Minnie Meier. The following year it was transferred by Minnie to Frana Sevey and Edna Meier. They held it until 1966 when it was sold to American Legion Post No. 4565. The property continued in the organization's hands until 1977 when it was sold to John and Elaine Shaw. A sheriff's deed saw the property transferred in 1984 to the mortgage holder, First State Savings Bank. The following year in 1985 it was transferred to Thomas Chandler. Chandler converted the house to a rental property eventually and continues to own and rent it 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 108 First Street NW; 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.

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

Site Number 22-01384  
Related District Number 22-01381

Page 4

---

Koehn House	Clayton
Name of Property	County
108 First Street NW	Elkader
Address	City

---

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." 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.

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.

"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,.

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.

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

Site Number 22-01384  
 Related District Number 22-01381

Page 5

Koehn House	Clayton
Name of Property	County
108 First Street NW	Elkader
Address	City

*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).

**Additional Information:**

Full Legal Description: Original Town of Elkader, Lot 7, Block 4.

**Address: 108 First St NW**



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 22-01384  
Related District Number 22-01381

Page 6

Koehn House  
Name of Property  
108 First Street NW  
Address

Clayton  
County  
Elkader  
City



**Photographs;** 108 First Street NW, looking east (Elkader Downtown Survey Photographs, 9/16/2010 and 10/29/2010, Marlys Svendsen, photographer)

