

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

State Inventory No. **52-01059**

New  Supplemental

Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) \_\_\_\_\_

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 Bloom-Ries Building

other names/site number Blooms - One Price Clothing House, Bloom & Mayer; Ries Iowa Book Store

**2. Location**

street & number 30 S. Clinton Street

city or town Iowa City

vicinity, county Johnson

Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name \_\_\_\_\_

Township No. \_\_\_\_\_ Range No. \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter of Quarter \_\_\_\_\_

(If Urban) Subdivision Original Town

Block(s) 80

Lot(s) Part of 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 | — |
| — | — |
| — | — |
| 1 | — |
| — | — |

**Name of related project report or multiple property study** (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).

Title Iowa City Central Business District Study - 2017 UPDATE

Historical Architectural Data Base Number 52-127

**6. Function or Use**

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

02E COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

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

02E COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

**7. Description**

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

09F COMMERCIAL/Brick Front

05F LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation 03 BRICK

walls 03 BRICK

roof \_\_\_\_\_

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 Johnson  
City Iowa City

Address 30 S. Clinton Street

Site Number 52-01059  
District Number

**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

1870

check if circa or estimated date

Other dates

**Significant Person**

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Architect

unknown

Builder

unknown

**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 Alexa McDowell, Historian

organization AKAY Consulting

date 10/2017

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city or town Minneapolis

state MN

zip code 55407

**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

Related District Number

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Bloom-Ries Building  
Name of Property  
30 S. Clinton Street  
Address

Johnson  
County  
Iowa City  
City

## 7. Property Description

The Bloom Clothing building is a 3-story, 20- by 62-foot, single bay building set amid a contiguous block of commercial properties, near the south end of the block. The building constitutes the south half of a two-bay property likely constructed prior to 1874, when it first appeared on the Sanborn Co. fire insurance map for that year. A building with the same footprint appears on all subsequent fire insurance maps and no evidence has been located to suggest the present structure is not that recorded on the 1874 fire insurance map. Further, early historic images document its presence. Svendsen notes that “historical information suggests that the building may be as early as 1857.” The south half (30) of the building has functioned autonomously for nearly 100 years and, as a result, is considered independent of the north half (28).

As stated by Svendsen, the original building was built as a two bay, 3-story structure, with a storefront in each half and a combination of apartments and office spaces located on the upper floors. The early building had a brick facade with a cast iron storefront. Typical of Late Victorian era Italianate Style commercial buildings, the upper stories featured tall and narrow windows with heavy, window hoods; a prominent cornice finished the building. The façade of north half of the building (28) was significantly altered in ca.1923.

The 2001 survey notes “the storefront now has its entrance at the left with large plate glass shop windows to the right. A cast iron molding separates the first floor from the upper levels. The building has a rubble stone foundation with brick walls that are now painted. The cornice includes a course of dentils and modillions and crown molding.”

In subsequent years, the building has been well-maintained with the historic, character-defining features retained, albeit altered, in the upper façade. Notably, the cornice has been altered from the original, windows have been replaced, and the brick has been painted. Because those modifications have been made with care to preserve the historic details (cornice is detailed and window openings and their details are retained) the historic character is reasonably well maintained. The building’s storefront has been altered since 2001. The entrance to the upper levels remains on the left of the storefront and there has been an entrance added to the right side of the storefront for the clothing store that occupies the first level. Situated between the two entrances are the large plate glass windows. Although contemporary in character, the storefront retains the historic opening, with a sense of scale and proportion that does not detract from the upper façade.

**Image 01.** View of the streetscape within which the building is located, looking NE across S. Clinton Street.



(Image by AKAY Consulting, August 2017)

The resource is located adjacent to the corner building (second from the right).

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**Image 02.** View of the façade (west elevation), looking east across S. Clinton Street



(Image by AKAY Consulting, August 2017)

Before and after . . . 28 and 30 S. Clinton reflecting the appearance of the Late Victorian façade (retained on the right) and the 20<sup>th</sup> century renovation undertaken on the Ewers Men's Store façade.

## 8. Statement of Significance

The building at 30 S. Clinton Street has been referred to variously as Blooms – One Price Clothing House, Moses Bloom Clothing, Bloom & Mayer, and Reis Iowa Book Store - the 2001 evaluation did not prioritize those names. For the purposes of the present evaluation, the Bloom-Ries Building has been adopted as the historic name because it represents the original owner as well as the two longtime occupants.

The Bloom-Ries Building is located directly opposite Old Capitol, a National Historic Landmark, and the Pentacrest, a National Register historic district. The resource is a moderately well-preserved example of the commercial form of the Late Victorian Italianate style. The resource is locally significant under Criterion C as an early and increasingly rare, stylistic expression in the Iowa City downtown. The building is also significant under Criterion A; contributing as it does to our understanding of the history of commerce in Iowa City. As a result, the resource is considered a contributing resource to a potential National Register historic district.

Although the building's storefront has been altered from the historic, the upper stories retain a good level of historic integrity of design and materials. Because alteration of storefronts is a typical condition of historic commercial buildings, the impact of that loss is mitigated by the retention of the upper façade, which provides the building's historic stylistic character.

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Bloom-Ries Building

Johnson

Name of Property

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30 S. Clinton Street

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## Historical Background

As originally laid out, Clinton Street provided a series of lots facing onto “Capitol Square.” This commercial building dates from prior to 1874 when a building of similar dimensions was first depicted on a fire insurance map. Property transfer records for this property show it owned by Moses Bloom and members of his family from prior to the Civil War through World War I, during which time the building was a two-bay property with two storefronts (Svendsen, 2001).

It should be noted that the city’s address system has changed multiple times. Per the 1874 fire insurance maps, storefronts in this block of S. Clinton were numbered consecutively from 37 on the north to 22 on the south; the clothier being located at 23-24 S. Clinton. In 1883, the fire insurance map records the storefronts as numbered by odd-number from 1 on the north to 31 on the south corner. Thus, the 2-bay building was numbered 27-29 S. Clinton. By 1888, the current numbering system was in place, and the building was identified as 28-30 S. Clinton, with the Bloom-Ries Building numbered 30 S. Clinton.

Svendsen notes that Moses Bloom arrived in Iowa City from New York City in 1857 and opened a clothing store a short time later on the east side of Clinton Street, possibly at this address; this supports the assertion that the building was constructed as early as 1857. Bloom’s clothing store also included a merchant tailoring business and handled men’s hats and furnishings. By 1868 the city directory notes, “M. Bloom, clothier, es Clinton nr. Iowa ave.” and the 1874 fire insurance map notes a clothier in both 28 and 30. When Bloom’s son-in-law Max Mayer joined the business, the firm became known as Bloom and Mayer. Moses Bloom also owned other parcels in this block (Block 80) to the north and east of his property at 28-30 S. Clinton.

### **Image 03.** Historic Image - undated (ca.1870)



(Image courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.)

In this view, looking northeast across S. Clinton at Washington Street, we see the Bloom Clothing Store (note blade sign) adjacent to the corner building (later, the location of Whetstone’s). The clothing store occupies 30 S. Clinton – the south half of the 2-bay building. A sliver of the north half (28) provides a glimpse of the similarity of appearance.

# Iowa Site Inventory Form Continuation Sheet

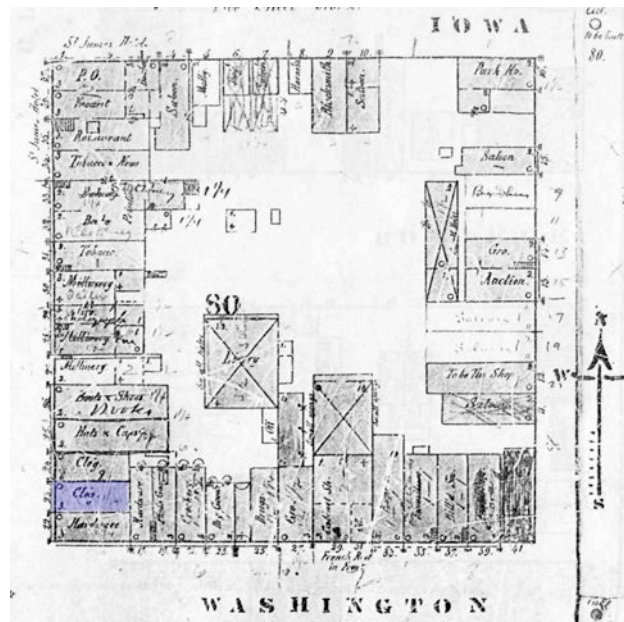
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Bloom-Ries Building  
Name of Property  
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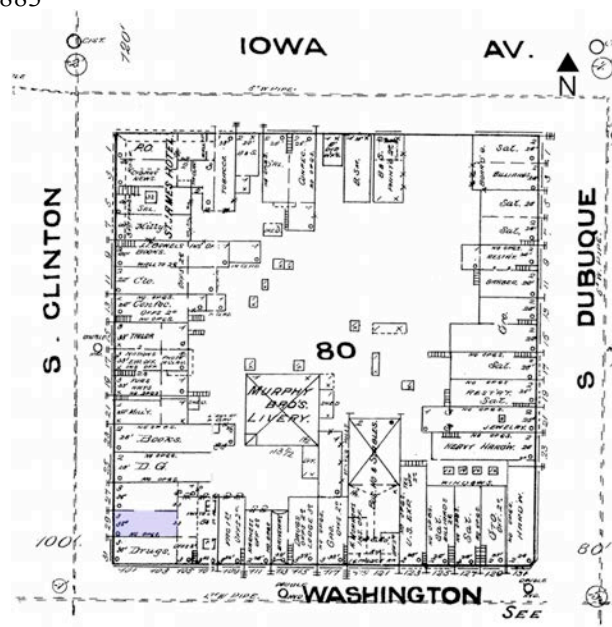
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**Figure 01.** Insurance Map – 1874



(SOURCE: Sanborn Company Fire Insurance Map, 1874.)

**Figure 02.** Insurance Map – 1883



(SOURCE: Sanborn Company Fire Insurance Map, 1883.)

In contrast to the 1874 fire insurance map, the 1883 map notes an interior connection between 28 and 30.

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Bloom-Ries Building

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## Image 04. Historic Image - ca.1888



(Image courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.)

In a similar view across Clinton and Washington Streets, we see the entire 2-bay building in its place to the north of Whetstone's (then Whetstone & Foltz). Though difficult to see, the name "Blooms" stretches across the upper façade, just beneath the cornice, with "One Price Clothing House" mounted between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. Bloom's occupation of both bays of the building is supported by city directory entries, which place the business in both storefronts through ca.1911.

## Image 06. Historic Image - ca.1905



(Image courtesy of the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.)

In this ca.1905 view of the east side of S. Clinton Street, looking south from Iowa Avenue, we can see the unified façade of the building at 28-30 S. Clinton – the cornice and rhythm of fenestration of each bay matches.

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As noted by Svendsen, both Bloom and Mayer were active in civic life in Iowa City. Moses Bloom served as mayor in 1874 and was elected to the state legislature in 1877 and 1879. Max Mayer was Iowa City postmaster for a time and was a promoter of athletics at the State University of Iowa where he was sometimes referred to as the “father of Iowa football.”

The era of a unified Bloom-Ries Building ended in 1914 when Bloom sold the south half of the original, double-wide building to John T. Ries who had operated Ries Iowa Book Store from this location since ca.1909. Ries’ motto for the business was “The Store of Personal Service” selling a range of SUI souvenirs including “Old Gold Banners” in addition to books and stationery.

The north half of the building was sold to Arthur M. and Florence Ewers in 1919. At the time the Ewers purchased the Bloom building, A.M. Ewer & Co., was located in the Furbish Block on the southwest corner of S. Clinton and College Streets. Despite the split in ownership, the façade remained stylistically unified until 1923 when Arthur Ewer remodeled the north half of the former Bloom building (28) and relocated his business to that storefront.

John T. Ries continued to operate the Iowa Book Store from 30 S. Clinton Street through ca.1952. By 1954 the Hawkeye Book Store was located in the storefront.

In 2017 the storefront is occupied by Tailgate Clothing. The upper story houses condominiums/apartments.

## 9. Major Bibliographic References (2001)

Iowa City city directories.

Property Transfer Records, Johnson County Auditor’s Office.

Tax Assessor’s Records, City of Iowa City Assessor.

Summary Sheets, 28 South Clinton, Urban Revitalization Act Study Area Survey, 1981.

Sanborn maps, 1874, 1879, 1888, 1892, 1899, 1906, 1912, 1920, 1926, 1933, and 1933 updated to 1970.

Weber, Irving, “Clinton Street Famous for Many Clothing Stores,” *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, July 26, 1980.

## 2017: References

Iowa City Public Library. Digital Photograph collection. <http://history.icpl.org>.

*Iowa City Then & Now*. Publisher unknown.

Mansheim, Gerald. *Iowa City: an illustrated history*. Norfolk, VA: The Donning Company, 1989.

State Historical Society of Iowa. Iowa City. Photograph Collection.

Slonneger, Marybeth. *Finials: A View of Downtown Iowa City*. Iowa City: Hand Press, 2015.



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Svendsen, Marlys A. "Survey and Evaluation of the Central Business District." Prepared for the Iowa City Historic Preservation Commission, 2001.

Svendsen, Marlys A. "Grossix Building: 52-01059." Iowa Site Form, 2001.

## Timeline: Bloom-Ries Building

Building Numbering: 1874 23  
1883 29  
1888 30  
1892 30

- 1868 City Directory: "M. Bloom, clothier, es Clinton nr. Iowa ave." Noted in business directory under "Ready Made Clothing" – same location.
- 1874 Fire Insurance Map: 3-story, "clothing"
- 1883 Fire Insurance Map: 3-story, 38-ft. frontage, interior connection with building to the north (28), "clothing." No change in footprint.
- 1888 Fire Insurance Map: 3-story, 36-ft. frontage, interior connection with building to the north (28), iron columns on 1<sup>st</sup>, "clothing." No change in footprint.
- 1892 Fire Insurance Map: 3-story, iron columns 1<sup>st</sup> floor, "clothing." No change in footprint.
- 1899 Fire Insurance Map: 3-story, iron columns 1<sup>st</sup> floor, interior connected: 28-30-32, "clothing." No change in footprint.
- 1901 City Directory: 26-30 S. Clinton, Bloom & Mayer, clothiers. In business directory, noted at 30 S. Clinton
- 1906 Fire Insurance Map: 3-story, 40-ft. frontage, iron columns 1<sup>st</sup> floor, interior connected: 28-30, "clothing." No change in footprint.
- 1909 City Directory:  
Max Mayer, clothier and furnisher, 28 and 30 S. Clinton  
John T. Ries, proprietor Iowa Book Store, wholesale & retail books and stationery, 26 S. Clinton
- 1911 City Directory (Reverse): 28-30 Max Mayer
- 1912 Fire Insurance Map: 3-story, 40-ft. frontage, iron columns 1<sup>st</sup> floor, interior connected: 28-30, "clothing." No change in footprint.
- 1915 City Directory (Reverse): 30 Iowa Book Store, John T. Ries, proprietor
- 1918 City Directory (Reverse): 30 Iowa Book Store
- 1919 City Directory (Reverse): 30 Iowa Book Store

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- 1920 Fire Insurance Map: 3-story, 40-ft. frontage, iron columns 1<sup>st</sup> floor, interior connected: 28-30, “books & stationary.” No change in footprint.
- 1922 City Directory (Reverse): 30 Ries Iowa Book Store
- 1926 Fire Insurance Map: 3-story, no interior connection to 30, occupant not noted, elevator in NE corner. No change in footprint.
- 1930 City Directory: 30 Ries Iowa Book Store, Wholesale and Retail Books and Stationery
- 1933 Fire Insurance Map: 3-story, 38-ft. frontage, occupant not noted, interior partition added.
- 1940 City Directory (Reverse): 30 Ries Iowa Book Store
- 1952 City Directory: 30 Ries Iowa Book Store
- 1954 City Directory (Business Directory, “books”): 30 Hawkeye Book Store
- 1959 City Directory (Reverse): 30 Hawkeye Book Store

## 11. Additional Documentation

Legal Description: beg. 20’ south of NW cor. of Lot 6, east 62’4”, south 20.43’, west 62’4”, north 20.43’

Assessor: 008+1010317003

Lat/Long: 41.660317/-91.534391

## Parcel Map – 2017

