United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FINAL

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Crawfordsville Commercial Historic District

other names/site number 107-127-22001-170

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet — n/a not for publication

city, town Crawfordsville — n/a vicinity

state IN code IN county Montgomery code 107 zip code 47933

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property: Contributing	Noncontributing	
[X] private	[ ] building(s)	105	34	buildings
[X] public-local	[X] district	0	0	sites
[ ] public-State	[ ] site	1	0	structures
[X] public-Federal	[ ] structure	1	0	objects
	[ ] object	107	34	Total

Name of related multiple property listing: n/a

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 2

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources — 2-3-92

Signature of certifying official — Date

Patrick R. Ralston

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. [ ] See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official — Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

[ ] entered in the National Register.
[ ] See continuation sheet.

[ ] determined eligible for the National Register. [ ] See continuation sheet

[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.

[ ] removed from the National Register.

[ ] other, (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)	Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store	COMMERCE/TRADE: specialty store
COMMERCE/TRADE: department store	COMMERCE/TRADE: business
COMMERCE/TRADE: business	COMMERCE/TRADE: professional
COMMERCE/TRADE: professional	GOVERNMENT: courthouse
GOVERNMENT: courthouse	

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)

ITALIANATE
NEOCLASSICAL
ARTS AND CRAFTS

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls BRICK
STONE
roof COMPOSITION
other TERRA COTTA
GLASS

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

[x] See continuation sheet

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates
COMMERCE	1836-1940	n/a
POLITICS/GOVERNMENT		
ARCHITECTURE		

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Significant Person

n/a

Architect/Builder

Beeson, Carroll O.
Sharpe, William F.

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

☒ See continuation sheet

[X] See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- [ ] preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- [X] previously listed in the National Register
- [ ] previously determined eligible by the National Register
- [ ] designated a National Historic Landmark
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- [ ] recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- [X] State historic preservation office
- [ ] Other State agency
- [ ] Federal agency
- [ ] Local government
- [ ] University
- [ ] Other

Specify repository: Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 60, more or less

UTM References

	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	16	508300	4432670
B	16	508300	4432670
C	16	508200	4431860
D	16	508260	4431820

[ ] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

[X] See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

[X] See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Laura Thayer, Historic Preservation Consultant, for
organization Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce date May 17, 1991
street & number 3905 N. 500 W. telephone 812/372-6806
city or town Columbus state IN zip code 47201

★U.S.GPO:1988-0-223-918

Roughly bounded by North Street on the north, Water Street on the east, Wabash Avenue on the south, and Walnut Street on the west.

Buildings previously listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence
225 N. Washington Street

Otto Schlemmer Building
129-131 N. Green Street

The Crawfordsville Commercial Historic District is located in Crawfordsville, in Union Township, in the center of Montgomery County. The northeast part of the county is flat, fertile farmland. The southwest part is rolling hills. Crawfordsville is the county seat, and, with a population of approximately 13,500, the largest city in the county. Sugar Creek runs through the northwest part of the city. State Roads 32 and 47, and U.S. Highways 231 and 136 meet in the commercial district. The Monon Railroad borders the northeast part of the district.

The district comprises a large part of the original plat, made in 1823. The areas north of North Street, and east of Water, are parts of early additions to the city. The district boundaries are drawn to exclude residential areas to the west, south, and east. The Elston Grove Historic District is adjacent to the commercial district on the south and east. Much of the area bounded by Washington, Market, Green and North Streets, historically a commercial/industrial area, has been omitted because of many alterations and new construction.

There are 139 buildings in the district. There are no sites. There is one structure, a short stretch of brick street on North Street between Washington and Green Streets. There is one object, the War Memorial Monument by the courthouse, which contributes to the character of the district. There are 34 noncontributing buildings. Of the contributing buildings, 78 are commercial buildings, 10 are commercial garages, seven are industrial buildings, seven are public buildings, two are organizational buildings, and one is a railroad depot. Two of the buildings in the district, the Otto Schlemmer Building, and the Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence were previously listed on the National Register.

The district focuses on the Montgomery County Courthouse, located roughly in the center (photo 16). The courthouse is surrounded by commercial buildings. The industrial buildings are located on the edges. Buildings of other types are scattered throughout. The street pattern is a regular grid, typical of towns throughout Indiana. Blocks are 440 feet square. Most streets are 66 feet wide. Washington Street, a major artery, is 99 feet wide. There is a regular system of north-south and east-west alleys, which divide each block into four equal squares. These alleys are 10 feet wide. Sidewalks are concrete, and

most streets are asphalt. There is a short stretch of brick street on North Street between Washington and Green Streets. Most of the buildings in the district are brick. There are several stone buildings. One exceptional building, the Ben Hur Life Building (photo 8), is faced in terra cotta. There are uniform setbacks throughout the district, except in the northern, industrial area. A few small trees have been introduced on some streets in recent years.

The commercial district was originally centered around the intersection of Market and Water Streets, where the federal land office was located. The first courthouse, a log structure, was located at the corner of Market and Green Streets. The post office was located on the southwest corner of Vernon (now Main) and Green. After the second courthouse was constructed, on the northeast corner of Washington and Vernon, the site of the present courthouse, commercial activity shifted south.

In the early days of the town, commercial buildings were of log or timber frame construction. The first brick buildings were constructed in 1830s. One of the earliest extant buildings is the Hanna-Graham Building, located at 101 N. Washington Street (left in photo 12) was remodeled in the Italianate style in the late 19th century. Another early building is the Otto Schlemmer Building, located at 129-131 N. Green Street (right in photo 18). Constructed in 1854, the building was remodeled in 1889. The New Albany and Salem Railroad came through Crawfordsville in 1852, at the northeast corner of the district. The area in the north part of the district acquired an industrial character, as factories and warehouses were built near the railroad. In the early years of the town, the original plat contained buildings of all types, including residences. The outlying areas had started to be developed for residential use, but were largely rural in character. As development accelerated, residences in the original plat were replaced by commercial buildings. As the town grew more prosperous, the early commercial buildings were remodeled or replaced by larger, grander commercial blocks.

About 1880, a period of rapid growth and commercial prosperity began. This period extended to about 1920.

As many as half of the buildings in the district were constructed before 1880. Most of these were later remodeled. Approximately 70 per cent of contributing buildings were constructed, or remodeled in a contemporary style, between 1880 and 1920. Twenty per cent were constructed between 1920 and 1940.

Among the buildings which date from before 1880 are the Elston Bank Building, an Italianate style building constructed in 1869, and located at 201-203 E. Main Street (photo 7); and the Montgomery County Courthouse, a Second Empire style building, completed in 1876, and located at 100 N. Washington Street (photo 16).

A large number of the buildings constructed or remodeled between 1880 and 1900 are Italianate in style. Among these are buildings on the north side of W. Main Street, west of Washington Street (photo 3); buildings on the west side of N. Washington Street, north of Main Street (photo 12); buildings on the west side of S. Washington Street, south of Main (photo 11); and buildings on the east side of N. Green Street, north of Main Street (photo 19). The Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence, a Victorian Romanesque style building constructed in 1882, was also built during this period (photo 14).

Many of the finest buildings in the district were built between 1900 and 1920. The Masonic Temple (photo 10), located at 221 S. Washington Street, and the Carnegie Library (photo 15), located at 222 S. Washington Street, are both Neoclassical in style, and were built in 1902. Both buildings were designed by local architect, W.F. Sharpe. The Commerce Building, home of the Knights of Pythias, was built in 1907. This building, Tudor Gothic in style, is located at 100 E. Market Street (photo 3). The Ben Hur Life Building, a Neoclassical style building distinctive for its elaborate terra cotta work, was built in 1911. It is located at 227 E. Main Street (photo 8).

After 1920, the local economy experienced a decline which lasted until World War II. The automobile industry was one industry which was growing. Many of the buildings constructed in the district between 1920 and 1940 were garages. Among these are the building at 118 W. Market

Street, and the building at 114-116 N. Water Street (right in photo 22). Several government buildings were constructed during this period as well. The Neoclassical style Municipal Buildings, designed by Carroll O. Beeson, was built in 1933. It is located at 300 E. Pike Street. The Art Deco style Indiana National Guard Armory, built in 1929, is located at 119 N. Green Street (left in photo 18).

During the last 50 years, many changes have taken place in downtown Crawfordsville. A number of storefronts have been altered, and some buildings have been torn down. In spite of these changes, the historical character remains intact, and a large number of architecturally distinctive and historically important buildings are extant.

The group of noncontributing buildings includes both historic structures which have been extensively altered, and buildings of recent construction. In the former category is a building at 218-220 E. Main Street which dates from the early 19th century, but received a new front in 1952. The building on the southeast corner of Pike and Walnut Streets (photo 23) is a late 19th century commercial building, whose storefront and second story windows have been altered. Other noncontributing buildings are contemporary intrusions. Among these are the Elston Bank, the tall building at the right in photo 11, which is compatible with the district in scale and materials; and a 1950 commercial building at 211 S. Green Street, which was built to replace a building of similar size which was destroyed by fire.

Descriptions of pivotal and representative buildings follow.

<u>Crabbs, Reynolds, and Taylor, North side of North Street, east of Washington Street</u>, 1912 (photo 1). Crabbs Reynolds and Taylor was located here since the late 19th century. Two buildings, both seed houses, remain from the company's complex. The east building is a five-story brick building, rectangular in plan, and eight by six bays wide. The roof is flat. Windows are double hung with two lights in each sash. Vertical brick pilasters alternate

with rows of windows. The west building is similar in design, but is three stories high, and has an L-shaped plan. Crabbs, Reynolds and Taylor, based in Crawfordsville, was one of the largest grain and elevator companies in the state. The 1940 Sanborn Map shows these two buildings, as well as an elevator of crib construction, a brick office and hay warehouse, and a wood frame coal shed.

Commerce Building, 100 E. Market Street, 1907 (photo 2). This is a four-story brick building with a three-bay main (south) facade. Tudor Gothic in style, it has battlements along the parapets, and decorative stonework. A stone tablet at the top of the center of the building is inscribed, "Commerce Building." Windows are arranged in groups of three. The building is essentially unaltered on the exterior. It was constructed by the Knights of Pythias for the home of the lodge, but also housed offices, including those of Crabbs, Reynolds, and Taylor.

U.S. Post Office, 300 E. Main, 1940 (photo 5). The post office, Art Deco in style, has a symmetrical facade, seven bays wide. It is a one-story building faced in smooth limestone. The roof is flat. Window bays are slightly recessed, from the top of the window to the top of a stone water table. The entry is in the center of the main (south) facade. A set of steps extends across the center three bays. The building has new aluminum doors and windows. It was designed by federal architect, Louis Simon.

Commercial Building, 101-105 E. Main, c. 1875 (photo 6). Typical in design of many of the buildings in the district, this is a three-story, brick, Italianate style structure, with a flat roof. The main facade, which faces Main Street, is nine bays wide. Upper story windows are round arched. There is a pressed metal, bracketed cornice around the top of the building. The storefronts have been altered. W.C. Murphy and Company, a mens clothing store, was located in 101 from about 1900 to about 1923. By 1930, the Crawfordsville Trust Company had moved into this space. The space at 103 was occupied by a grocery store in the 1880s. By about 1890, The Golden Rule dry goods store had opened here. This store continued to operate at this location until 1982. The third space on the first

floor was occupied by Madison C. Klein, who was a jeweler and watchmaker in Crawfordsville from 1875 to 1898. Klein occupied this space from at least 1891. He was succeeded in business by his son, who stayed here until about 1923.

Elston Bank, 201-203 E. Main Street, 1869 (photo 7). This may be the earliest extant Italianate style building in Crawfordsville. It is a three story, brick building with a flat roof. The has a 45 degree tangent on the corner, which contained the entry for the bank. The main facade, which faces Main Street, is six bays wide in addition to the entry corner. There were also entrances to stores on the Green Street side, which is five bays wide. Upper stories have round arch windows. There is a bracketed cornice around the top of the building. The storefronts have been altered.

Elston Bank was established in 1853 by Major Isaac C. Elston, and Henry S. Lane, both of Crawfordsville. It is one of the oldest banks in Indiana. Lane was not involved in the bank after 1861, when he started a term in the U.S. Senate. After Elston's death, in 1867, his son, Isaac C. Elston II, took over the management of the bank. General Lew Wallace, Elston II's brother-in-law was a partner in the bank. The bank was located on the west half of the first floor for about 60 years. In 1925, Elston Bank acquired Farmers, Merchants and Clements Trust Company. In 1927, Crawfordsville State Bank was purchased. In the late 1920s, Elston Bank acquired the building located at 132 E. Main, previously occupied by the Crawfordsville Trust Company. Elston Bank now occupies a new building on the southwest corner of Main and Washington Streets.

By 1930, the Bank Cigar Store occupied the west half of the first floor of 201 E. Main. Various stores have occupied the east half of the building, including a dry goods store, a millinery, a meat market, and a grocery store. For many years, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was a barber shop in the basement. In the late 19th century, the Western Union office was located at 102 S. Green, in the rear section of the building.

Ben Hur Life Building, 227 E. Main Street, 1912 (photo 8). This is a five-story, Neoclassical style building with a rectangular plan, and a flat roof. The building is five bays wide and 11 bays deep. The base of the building is faced in black granite. Above this base is a dentiled, white terra cotta frieze. Upper stories are faced in white terra cotta. The building has a symmetrical arrangement of window bays alternating with piers. Windows are grouped in threes, with a large middle window, and two narrow side windows to each group. They are double hung with one light in each sash. Between the windows within each bay is a green spandrel panel. Fifth floor window openings are segmental-arched. Above each of these openings is a terra cotta garland. Extending around the top of the building is a wide, classical entablature. Above this is a parapet with battlements. The exterior of the building has a high degree of integrity, except for openings in the base, which have been altered.

The Supreme Tribe of Ben Hur, a fraternal organization and mutual life insurance company, was founded in 1894 by David W. Gerard in Crawfordsville. The name was taken from the Lew Wallace novel. In the first two decades of the 20th century, it was the most important local business in terms of dollar assets. In 1930, the company became the Ben Hur Life Association. This building was constructed as headquarters for the organization, and as an office building.

Municipal Building, 300 E. Pike Street, 1933. The Municipal Building is a two-story, brick, Neoclassical style structure, which occupies a quarter block. The building is square in plan, and has a flat roof. The main (south) facade, is eleven bays wide. A recessed entry, framed by a two-story, stone, columned portico, is in the three center bays. Window openings have multi-light, casement sashes, and stone sills. Each of the first story windows on the end bays of the facade has a stone lintel surmounted by brickwork forming a round arch. Above each of the other first story windows is a stone panel. Second story windows have stone lintels. Carroll O. Beeson, a local architect, designed this 1933 structure.

Young Mens Christian Association, 201 E. Pike Street, c. 1920 (photo 9). The YMCA, Arts and Crafts in style, is a three-story brick structure with a raised basement. It is rectangular in plan, and has a flat roof. The main (north) facade is five bays wide. The entry is in the center bay. This is a large, double door, segmental-arched opening, surmounted by a bracketed hood. Window openings on the first level are segmental arched. In each opening is a double hung, wood window with sidelights and a transom. Upper story window openings have flat arches, and wood, double hung sashes. Decorative features include stone banding and accents, decorative brickwork, and a classical cornice around the top of the buildings.

The local YMCA was started in 1887. The organization's first building, constructed in 1889, was a Victorian Romanesque structure. The first organized basketball game in Indiana was played in the 1889 building. The present building was constructed in about 1920. In 1928, the local YMCA closed. Today, the building functions as the Township House for Union Township.

Masonic Temple, 215 S. Washington Street, 1902 (photo 10). The Masonic Temple is a two-and-a-half-story, brick building, with a raised basement. It is rectangular in plan, and has a flat roof. The main (east) facade is three bays wide. The first story of the facade is faced in coursed limestone. The entry, in the center, is flanked on each side by a round-arched window. A one-story stone portico, with stone columns and a stone balustrade, extends the width of the facade. Second story window openings have stone surrounds, and wood, double hung sashes with two lights in each sash. At the attic level, there is a square window with a stone surround in each bay. Alternating with upper story windows are stone pilasters. There is an elaborate stone entablature around the top of the building, which is surmounted by a stone balustrade.

Montgomery Lodge was granted a charter in 1844. The first home of the lodge was in a building on the southeast corner of Washington and Market Streets. This was destroyed by fire in 1858. The second home was on the

third floor of a building at 123-125 E. Main Street. This building is also gone. The present building is the third home of the lodge. The designer of the building was local architect, William F. Sharpe. The contractor was W.P. Jungclaus. The building has been the location of many community, as well as lodge, events. Banquets, receptions, proms, and funerals have been held here. The building's theater has used by the Crawfordsville Dramatic Club, Wabash College, and Crawfordsville High School. During both world wars, the lower floors were used by the Red Cross.

Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence, 225 N. Washington Street, 1882 (photo 14). Victorian Romanesque in style, the jail is a two-and-a-half story brick building with a raised basement. The building has an irregular plan and a complex roof. The base is rough cut, coursed limestone. The entry, located in the center of the east facade, has a wood paneled door flanked by stone columns, and surmounted by a two-light transom. A porch on this facade, has paired, turned wood posts, which support a bracketed frieze. A gable at the south end of the porch contains a round arch which defines the entry. At the top of the building is a wide, bracketed cornice. Among other details are round-arched openings and polychromatic stone and brick work. The one-story brick building at the rear of the lot, on E. Spring Street, was a heating plant for the jail. Plans for the building were drawn by E.J. Hodgson of Marion County.

This building contains the only known rotary jail in Indiana, and one of only two in the nation. The rotary jail, a short lived midwestern type of jail, had pie shaped cells which rotated to a single opening. The jail was remodeled in the 1930s to allow each cell its own door. The rotary mechanism has now been restored, and the jail serves as a museum. This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Carnegie Library, 222 S. Washington Street, 1902 (photo 15). This is a one-story, Neoclassical style structure with a raised basement. The building has a hip roof and is rectangular in plan. The main (west) facade is five bays wide. The base of the building is coursed stone.

Historically, the entry was in the center bay, with steps leading up to a stone stoop. In 1967, the front steps were removed, and the entry was made into a window, which matches adjacent, historic windows. This opening is round-arched, and has a round-arched head supported by Classical pilasters. It is framed by a stone, columned portico. The portico is flanked on each side by like openings, with multi-light sashes. In the late 1960s and 1970s, the library was remodeled and expanded. The Davis Garage, just north of the library, was acquired and a street level entry was constructed in a new section connecting the two buildings. An addition was constructed on the rear of the library as well. The Davis Garage retains its integrity on the exterior, and the connecting section is unobtrusive. The addition on the library is comparatively small, and is compatible in design and materials with the original structure. The architect of the 1902 building was W.F. Sharpe, who also designed the Masonic Temple.

Montgomery County Courthouse, 100 N. Washington Street, 1876 (photo 16). The Courthouse is a two-and-a-half-story structure with a raised basement. It is Neoclassical in style, and faced in brick and stone. The building, which is essentially rectangular in plan, has a mansard roof. The main (west) facade is an elaborate, but symmetrical composition of Classical stone detailing. It is nine bays wide. The entry is in the center bay, framed by a two-story, columned portico, with a pedimented gable. Window openings on this facade are segmental-arched on the first floor, and in the third, fourth, sixth, and seventh bays of the second floor. Windows in the first, second, eighth and ninth bays of the second floor are flat-arched. Above each second floor window is a square attic window. At the top of the building is an wide, elaborate entablature. The south facade features a stone arcade on the first level, in the center bays. The center bays are faced in brick, which along with the stone end bays, gives the building a polychromatic appearance. Detailing on this facade is similar to that on the main facade. A clock tower, which was located atop the pedimented portico of the main facade, was removed in the early 20th century because of structural problems. A mid-1980s rehab resulted in the loss of many interior elements of the courthouse.

At the northeast corner of Washington and Main Streets, in front of the courthouse, is the War Memorial Monument, a stone and bronze sculpture designed by Rudolf Schwartz and erected in 1906. Schwartz is best known as the designer of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Indianapolis.

This is the third and present Montgomery County Courthouse. The first courthouse was a log structure, located at the corner of Market and Green Streets. The second courthouse, built in 1831, was located on this site. The courthouse is unusual compared to other Indiana courthouses, in that it is located on a quarter block, with commercial buildings in the remainder of the block. Most courthouses in the state are situated on an entire block, with part of the block devoted to public park space. The courthouse was designed by George W. Bunting.

The Journal Building, 119 S. Green Street, 1893 (center of photo 17). The Journal Building is a two-story brick, Italianate style structure. The building has a cast-iron storefront and cornice. The main (east) facade is three bays wide. The entry is in the south bay. The center and north bay have large display windows. Upper story windows are wood, double hung, with one light in each sash. The building has rough cut, stone banding.

The Crawfordsville Journal was established in 1848 as a Republican newspaper. The office of the newspaper was first located on Main Street, and later across the alley from this building. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the two big rival newspapers in Crawfordsville were the Journal and the Crawfordsville Review, a Democratic newspaper, and successor to the first newspaper in Crawfordsville, established in 1831. In 1940, the two newspapers merged, becoming The Journal-Review, and located in this building.

Otto Schlemmer Building, 129-31 N. Green Street, 1854/1889 (right in photo 18). The Otto Schlemmer building is a two-story, brick, Italianate style structure. The facade is six bays wide. There are double door, transomed

entries in the second and fifth bays of the first story. Other first story bays have large, transomed display windows. Between the first and second story is a cast-iron frieze with the name, "Otto Schlemmer," inscribed in the center. The second story has a round-arched arcade, which extends the width of the facade. There is an iron railing between the arches of the arcade. Above the arcade is a cast iron cornice which includes a gable in the center with the date, "1889." Recessed behind the arcade is the wall which contains second story openings. There is a double, transomed door in the center. One each side of the door are two windows. These are tall, double hung windows with one light in each sash.

This building was constructed in 1854 as the Bennage Block. It is thought to have been the second brick commercial building in Crawfordsville. Otto Schlemmer was an owner of the Schlemmer-Vance Brewery until he sold his interest, in 1882, to by the north half of the Bennage Block. Three years later, he bought the south half, which contained the Schular blacksmith shop. The building was remodeled in 1889. Schlemmer maintained a saloon in the north half until 1907. His son then established a drugstore in the north half, which he operated until 1925. The Kroger Grocery and Baking Company occupied this half of the building for many years after that. The south half of the building was rented out, and was variously used as a restaurant, barber shop, and billiard hall. The building, one of the oldest extant structures in the district, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Monon Railroad Depot, west side of Monon Railroad tracks, at North Street, 1926 (photo 21). The depot is a one-story, brick, Arts and Crafts style building, with a rectangular plan. Under the eaves of the bell-cast hip roof are exposed rafters. There is a porte-cochere on the north side of the building. Windows are, for the most part, large, paired windows with transoms. Decorative features include stone banding and accents.

The Monon Railroad is an outgrowth of the New Albany and Salem Railroad, built in the early 1850s. Major Isaac Elston of Crawfordsville was involved in the development

of this railroad. In the late 19th century, it became known as the Monon Railroad. It was nicknamed the Hoosier Line, being the only railroad entirely contained in Indiana, and Indiana-owned, after railroad expansion and consolidation in the late 19th century. In 1914, there were about 114 depots on the Monon Railroad. Today, only 18 pre-World War II depots survive. The Crawfordsville Depot, now a railroad maintenance facility, was a passenger depot. Amtrak runs through Crawfordsville, but passengers use a 1977 waiting shelter on the platform, just south of the depot. There are two other historic railroad depots in Montgomery County: a 1912 Peoria and Eastern depot, located at 512 Wallace Avenue in Crawfordsville; and a 1905 junction depot of the Monon and the Toledo, St. Louis and Western Railroad, located in Linden.

Architect/Builder, Continued

Bunting, George W.
Hodgson, Edgar
Simon, Louis

The Crawfordsville Commercial Historic District is significant under Criterion A as the historic center of Montgomery County commercial and governmental activity. It is significant under Criterion C as the finest collection in the county of late 19th and early 20th century commercial architecture.

Montgomery County was created in 1822. The following year, Ambrose Whitlock, receiver of the federal land office, moved the office to Crawfordsville and platted the town. The original plat is bounded by North Street, Water Street, Wabash Avenue, and Walnut Street. Whitlock named Crawfordsville for his friend, William Crawford, then U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. He offered the odd numbered lots to the county, stipulating that Crawfordsville be named county seat, and that the money from the sale of the lots be used for education.

As the location of the federal land office between 1823 and 1853, Crawfordsville grew rapidly. This was a period in Indiana when the state was being settled, and there was a great deal of activity in land sales. The Crawfordsville office handled sales for Wabash, Tippecanoe, Fountain, Montgomery, Vermillion, Parke, Putnam, Hendricks, Morgan, Vigo, and Clay Counties, and parts of Owen, Delaware, and Monroe Counties. In 1826, and from 1828 through 1830, the Crawfordsville office was first in the nation in federal land sales. The location of this office at Crawfordsville insured that there would be a large number of travelers coming to town, who would patronize hotels, restaurants, and other commercial establishments. The designation of Crawfordsville as county seat was another major factor in the generation of commercial activity.

The best roads in those early days were generally those built by the state which connected county seats. In 1824, a road was constructed which linked Crawfordsville with Terre Haute and Indianapolis. Though these early roads were little more than cleared paths, they were important in that they provided a way for people to get to government centers. Because of the roads, and because many stores were located in county seats, it was natural

that these government centers would also become the most important market centers. Such was the case in Crawfordsville. Crawfordsville's founders had recognized the advantage of situating the town on Sugar Creek. This factor, as well as its location on an important road, led to the town being developed as an industrial center.

The establishment of Wabash College, in 1832, contributed to the town's growth. A local census, conducted in 1835, recorded the population at 994. By 1850, it had reached 1,513. In 1852, an important event occurred that insured that Crawfordsville would prosper into the 20th century: the first railroad, the New Albany and Salem, arrived. This would later become part of the Monon Railroad. Major Isaac Elston, an early settler who would become one of the most prominent businessmen in the state, was instrumental in bringing the railroad to town. The railroad, as in other parts of Indiana, led to the growth of industry. Among early and important industries in Crawfordsville were slaughtering and packing houses, and lumber and grist mills. Many of these early industries were located on the north side of the commercial district, between Sugar Creek and the railroad.

Agriculture increased in importance with the arrival of the railroad. In the early days of the county, farmers were occupied with clearing the land, and providing food for their families. As farms became established, surplus farm goods were produced, but it was difficult and expensive to get them to market. Keel boats were used on Sugar Creek, but were not very successful. Roads were primitive, and inadequate for hauling long distances. The Wabash and Erie Canal went through Lafayette, about 30 miles to the north, but the rates were too high for many farmers.

The railroad meant that surplus farm goods could be shipped to markets. This contributed to the growth of farming in Montgomery County, which contains some of the richest farm lands in Indiana. It also led to the establishment, in Crawfordsville, of an increased number of agricultural storage facilities, and food

processing industries. Two more railroads - the Indianapolis, Crawfordsville and Danville, in 1869; and the Logansport, Crawfordsville, and Southwestern, in 1873 - provided access to additional markets.

The nationwide economic depression which started in 1873 and lasted until 1879, contributed to a redistribution of population in Montgomery County. With the decline of agricultural markets, many people came from rural areas to Crawfordsville looking for work. Between 1870 and 1880, Crawfordsville's population increased from 3,701 to 5,251. Crawfordsville, like other Indiana cities, was undoubtedly affected by the depression. The construction of the third and present Montgomery County Courthouse during this period is an attestation, however, to community confidence in a prosperous future.

Crawfordsville's greatest period of prosperity started about 1880 and extended to 1920. This was a period of economic growth throughout central and northern Indiana. Technological improvements in agriculture and industry, an increased demand for goods of all types, and an expanded railroad network were important factors in this growth. Industrial products which started to be manufactured in the late 19th century included bricks, wire and fencing, matches, furniture and coffins, staves and barrels, and corrugated metal culverts. The printing industry was also important to the local economy. The city's population increased from 5,251 in 1880, to 10,139 in 1920. It was during these years that the commercial district achieved much of its present character.

After 1920, Crawfordsville continued to grow, but at a slower rate than in the previous four decades. The recession in agriculture in the 1920s affected the town, whose population only increased by 216 during that decade. Between 1930 and 1940, the decade of a nationwide depression, the population grew by only 734. This economic downturn resulted in slowed development in the commercial district. During this period, however, several public buildings were constructed. Also, because of the rapid growth of the automobile industry, a number of garages were built.

Most of the buildings in the district are commercial buildings with stores or other commercial uses on the first floor, and office space on the upper floors. The Otto Schlemmer Building (right in photo 18), an 1854 structure remodeled in 1889, is one of the oldest buildings in the district. It is located at 129-131 N. Green Street. Schlemmer established a saloon in the building in the 1880s. His was one of many saloons. A city directory published in 1905 lists 19 in downtown Crawfordsville.

The Elston Bank Building, built in 1869, and located at 201-203 E. Main Street (photo 7), is a representation of Crawfordsville's early prosperity. Established in 1853, the bank is one of the oldest in Indiana. Its banking room was located in the first floor of the west half of the building until the late 1920s. The building at 101-103 N. Washington Street (photo 6), built about 1880, is fairly typical of late 19th century commercial buildings in the district. Various types of stores were housed on its first floor, including a clothing store and a jewelry store. Offices occupied the upper floors. The Journal, one of the two important newspapers of the 19th and early 20th centuries, was located in the building at 119 S. Green Street, built in 1892 (center of photo 17).

Among early 20th century buildings is the Ben Hur Life Building, an office building completed in 1911, located at 227 E. Main Street (photo 8). As one of the largest and most elaborately detailed buildings in the district, it reflects Crawfordsville's continuing prosperity in the early 20th century. Other early twentieth century buildings are the Strand Theater, built in 1919, and located at 120-126 S. Green Street; the Farmers Produce Association, built about 1920, and located at 211-215 N. Washington Street (left in photo 14); and the Monon Hotel, built about 1920, and located at 123 N. Green Street (center of photo 18).

A number of fraternal organizations were located in buildings in the district. For the most part, lodges were located on an upper floors, and first floors were devoted to commercial uses. This was true of the Commerce Building, built by the Knights of Pythias in 1907, and located at 100 E. Market Street (photo 2). The Masonic Temple, built in 1902, and located at 221 S. Washington

Street, was built solely to house the lodge (photo 10).

There are a few industrial buildings located in the district. Historically, industrial uses were concentrated in the north part of the district, but were also scattered throughout. Blacksmith shops, planing mills, and wagon factories were interspersed with dry goods stores and restaurants. Gradually, this changed, with most industrial activities moving outside the downtown area. There are, however, several historic industrial buildings which remain within the district boundaries. Among the most significant of these are two buildings, constructed in 1912, of the Crabbs, Reynolds, and Taylor complex, located on the north side of North Street, east of Washington Street (photo 1). This was one of the largest grain and elevator companies in the state.

Closely related to industry and commerce was the railroad. The Monon Railroad Depot (photo 21), built in 1926, and located just east of the Crabbs, Reynolds, and Taylor buildings, represents this important mode of transportation. Two interurban lines also ran through the district in the early 20th century. The station for one of these was located in the south half of a building, constructed about 1875, located at 116-118 N. Washington Street. Other transportation-related buildings include a number of garages. Among these are the building located at 115 E. Spring Street, built about 1916 to house a Model T Ford sales and service facility. The Davis Garage, at 220 S. Washington Street, built about 1925, is now part of the public library, built in 1902, and located to the south, at 222 S. Washington Street.

The district retains its historic public buildings, which define its role as the center of government in Crawfordsville and Montgomery County. The oldest of these is the Montgomery County Courthouse, a Second Empire style building completed in 1876 (photo 16). This building, located at 100 N. Washington Street, serves as a focal point for the district. Another county building is the Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence, built in 1882, and located at 225 N. Washington Street (photo 14). City government is represented by the Neoclassical

Municipal building, constructed in 1933, and located 300 E. Pike Street. The U.S. Post Office, built in 1940, is located at 300 E. Main Street (photo 5). Other public buildings include the Indiana National Guard Armory, built in 1929, and located at 119 N. Green Street (left in photo 18); and the Carnegie Library, built in 1902, and located at 222 S. Washington Street (photo 15).

The buildings in the Crawfordsville Commercial Historic District comprise the finest collection of commercial buildings in the county. There are several outstanding works of architecture. One of the most intact examples of the Italianate style, seen in the majority of the commercial buildings, is a building at 105-107 N. Washington Street, constructed in the 1830s, but remodeled in 1882 (second from left in photo 12). This is a two-story, brick building which features a bracketed, pressed metal cornice, and a prism glass transom. The north storefront has been altered, but the south, cast-iron storefront remains intact.

Other good examples of the style can be seen on the north side of W. Main Street, between Walnut and Washington Streets (photo 3). Except for the building at 120, which was constructed about 1940, these are all Italianate style structures, built between about 1880 and 1900. In some cases, the storefronts of these buildings have been altered, but the upper stories remain intact. This block of buildings conveys the uniformity of the style, which was popular in commercial districts throughout Indiana.

There are several outstanding examples of other 19th century styles in the district. The 1876 Montgomery County Courthouse (photo 16), displays the elaborate ornamentation and variety of detailing typical of the Second Empire style. The courthouse formerly had a tower, located in the center of the west facade. This was removed early in the 20th century because of structural problems. The Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence (photo 14) is the finest local example of the Victorian Romanesque style. Constructed in 1882, the building is significant as one of only two known examples of a rotary jail.

The Neoclassical style was popular in Crawfordsville in the early 20th century, and there are several examples in the district. The Carnegie Library (photo 15), a limestone structure designed by local architect W.F. Sharpe and built in 1902, is one of the finest of these. Among other representations of the style are a commercial building at 118 E. Main Street, built about 1900; the Crawfordsville Trust Company Building at 132 E. Main Street, built about 1910; the Ben Hur Life Building (photo 8), an outstanding terra cotta building constructed in 1911; and the Municipal Building, designed by local architect, Carroll O. Beeson, and built in 1933.

The best local example of the Arts and Crafts style is the Young Mens Christian Association, built about 1920, and located at 201 E. Pike Street (photo 9). This building features textured brick, decorative stonework, and carved, wooden brackets. The Farmers Produce Association (left in photo 14), built about 1920, is another representation. Elements of the style displayed in this building include textured, multi-color brick, and decorative stonework. Other examples include the Marble and Granite Building, constructed in 1919, and located at 116 W. Market Street, and the Indiana Printing Company Building, constructed about 1913, and located at 121 E. Pike Street.

The Post Office (photo 5), built in 1940, conveys the simplicity and horizontality of the Art Deco style. Other examples of this style include a commercial building at 125-127 N. Washington Street, and the Indiana National Guard Armory (left in photo 18). The closely related Art Moderne style is represented by a garage, built about 1940, and located at 114-116 N. Water Street (right in photo 23).

Elsewhere in Crawfordsville, few buildings related to commerce survive. The Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory identifies six. These are a store at 301 E. College Street (within the boundaries of the Elston Grove Historic District), the Hoosier Crown Corporation Office at 100 Harrison Street, the Oaks Company Building at 501 N. Walnut Street, a granary at 301 Lafayette Avenue, the R.R. Donnelley and Sons Company Building on Sloan Street, and the Indiana Match Company Building at

1200 E. Elmore Street.

The inventory identifies six commercial historic districts in Montgomery County, other than the Crawfordsville Commercial Historic District. These are the New Richmond Commercial Historic District, the Wingate Commercial Historic District, the Waynetown Commercial Historic District, the Darlington Main Street Historic District, the Waveland Commercial Historic District, and the Ladoga Commercial Historic District. These districts are located in towns which were small, but historically important, market towns, where day-to-day needs were met. For the residents and surrounding farm families of these towns, the Crawfordsville commercial area was where they could buy items, obtain services, and make use of transportation facilities not available to them locally.

The largest and most important of these small towns was Ladoga, located in the southeast corner of Montgomery County, on the Monon Railroad. Ladoga has a historic commercial district of 25 buildings. The town was the location of several industries, including a stave factory, a buggy factory, and woolen and sorghum mills. Twenty of the buildings in the Ladoga Commercial Historic District were constructed in the late 19th century. Fourteen of these 20 are Italianate in style. This uniformity reflects the town's peak period of importance, from about 1880 to 1900. In this regard, Ladoga is typical of Montgomery County's small towns, which had more vitality in the 19th century than later, when the automobile made the county seat more accessible.

The Crawfordsville Commercial Historic District illustrates a different type of market center, one with a greater diversity of architecture, and commercial uses. Many of the district's buildings have been altered, and some have been demolished. The historic character of the downtown, however, remains essentially intact, expressing the typical arrangement and development of a central Indiana county seat. In recent years, interest in revitalizing the downtown has developed. The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce is seeking to have the district placed on the National Register as part of this effort.

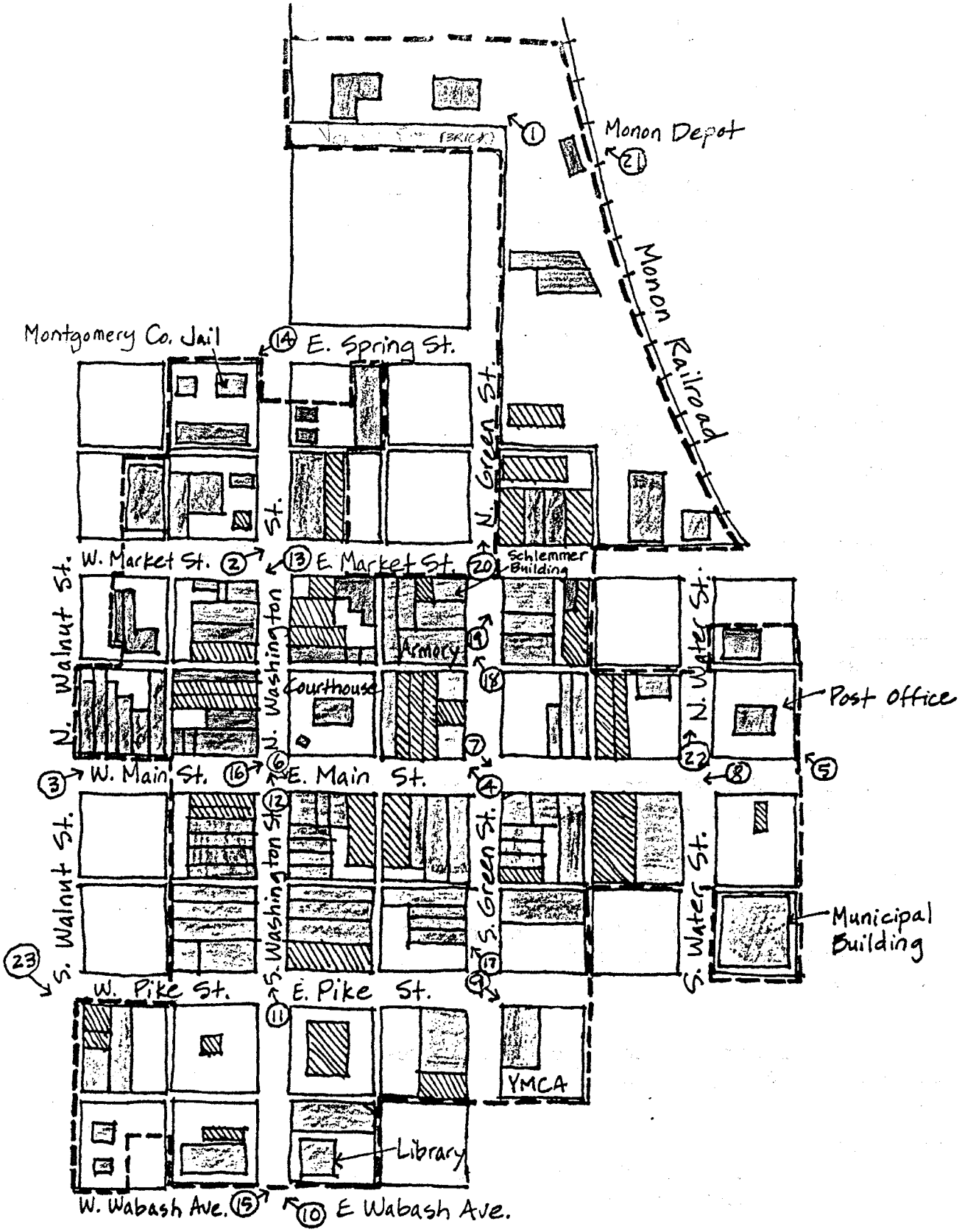
Verbal Boundary Description

Beginning at the northeast corner of Walnut Street and Wabash Avenue; thence north to the southeast corner of Walnut and Pike Streets; thence east to the east side of the north-south alley east of Walnut; thence north across Pike and Main Streets to the north side of Main; thence west to the northeast corner of Walnut and Main Streets; thence north along the east side of Walnut to the south side of the east-west alley north of Main Street; thence east along said alley to the southwest corner of lot 52 of the original plat; thence north 25 feet; thence west 12 feet; thence north across Market Street to the south side of the east-west alley north of Market; thence east to the east side of the north-south alley west of Washington Street; thence north along the east side of said alley to the south side of Spring Street; thence east to the southwest corner of Spring and Washington; thence south along the west side of Washington to the southeast corner of lot 65 of the original plat; thence east across Washington Street to a point 50 feet west of the west side of the north-south alley east of Washington Street; thence north to the south side of Spring Street; thence east 50 feet to the west side of the north-south alley east of Washington Street; thence south along said alley to the north side of the east-west alley north of Market Street; thence west 80 feet; thence south to the south side of Market Street; thence east to the southeast corner of Market and Green Streets; thence north along the east side of Green Street to the south side of North Street; thence west along the south side of North Street to the southeast corner of North and Washington Streets; thence north 280 feet; thence east to the west side of the Monon Railroad tracks; thence southeast along said tracks to the north side of Market Street; thence west to the west side of the north-south alley east of Green Street; thence south to the south side of the east-west alley north of Main Street; thence east to the east side of Water Street; thence north 100 feet; thence east to the west side of the north-south alley east of Water; thence south across Main Street to the north side of Pike Street; thence west to the northeast corner of Pike and Water Streets; thence north to the north side of the east-west alley north of

Pike; thence west across Water Street to the west side of a north-south alley east of Green Street; thence south across Pike Street to the north side of the east-west alley south of Pike Street; thence west across Green Street to the west side of the north-south alley west of Green Street; thence south along the west side of said alley to the north side of Wabash Avenue; thence west across Washington Street to the east side of the north-south alley west of Washington; thence north along said alley to a point on the axis of the south boundary of lot 42 of the original plat; thence west along said boundary 80 feet; thence south to the north side of Wabash Avenue; thence west to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

The district comprises the historic commercial and governmental center of Crawfordsville. Most of the block bounded by North, Green, Spring and Washington Streets, and the east half of the block bounded by Spring, Green, Market, and Washington Streets, were historically part of this center, but have been omitted because of a loss of integrity. Surrounding the commercial district on the east, south, and west, are residential areas.



CRAWFORDSVILLE COMMERCIAL H.D.

contributing

noncontributing

① photo view

--- boundary

↑ north

FINAL

Rev. 9/91

LT 5/91

Photo 16
1. Montgomery County Courthouse
   100 N. Washington Street
6. camera facing northeast
7. 16 of 23

Photo 17
1. West side of S. Green Street, north of Pike Street
6. camera facing northwest
7. 17 of 23

Photo 18
1. West side of N. Green Street, north of Main Street
6. camera facing northwest
7. 18 of 23

Photo 19
1. East side of N. Green Street, north of Main Street
6. camera facing northeast
7. 19 of 23

Photo 20
1. N. Green Street, north of Market Street
6. camera facing north
7. 20 of 23

Photo 21
1. Monon Railroad Depot
   West side of Monon Railroad, near North Street
6. camera facing northwest
7. 22 of 23

Photo 22
1. N. Water Street, north of Main Street
6. camera facing northeast
7. 22 of 23

Photo 23
1. Southeast corner of Pike and Walnut Streets
6. camera facing southeast
7. 23 of 23

Information the same for all photographs:

1. Crawfordsville Commercial Historic District
2. Crawfordsville, Indiana
3. Laura Thayer
4. April 1991
5. 3905 N. 500 W.
   Columbus, IN 47201

Other information for individual photographs:

Photo 1
1. Crabbs, Reynolds and Taylor
   North side of E. North Street, east of Washington Street
6. camera facing northwest
7. 1 of 23

Photo 2
1. Commerce Building
   100 E. Market Street
6. camera facing northeast
7. 2 of 23

Photo 3
1. North side of W. Main Street, west of Wabash Avenue
6. camera facing northeast
7. 3 of 23

Photo 4
1. North side of E. Main, west of Green Street
6. camera facing northwest
7. 4 of 23

Photo 5
1. U.S. Post Office
   300 E. Main Street
6. camera facing northwest
7. 5 of 23

Photo 6
1. Southeast corner of Main and Washington Streets
6. camera facing southeast
7. 6 of 23

Photo 7
1. South side of E. Main, east of Green Street
6. camera facing southeast
7. 7 of 23

Photo 8
1. South side of E. Main Street, west of Water Street
6. camera facing southwest
7. 7 of 23

Photo 9
1. YMCA
   201 E. Pike Street
6. camera facing southeast
7. 9 of 23

Photo 10
1. Masonic Temple
   221 S. Washington Street
6. camera facing northwest
7. 10 of 23

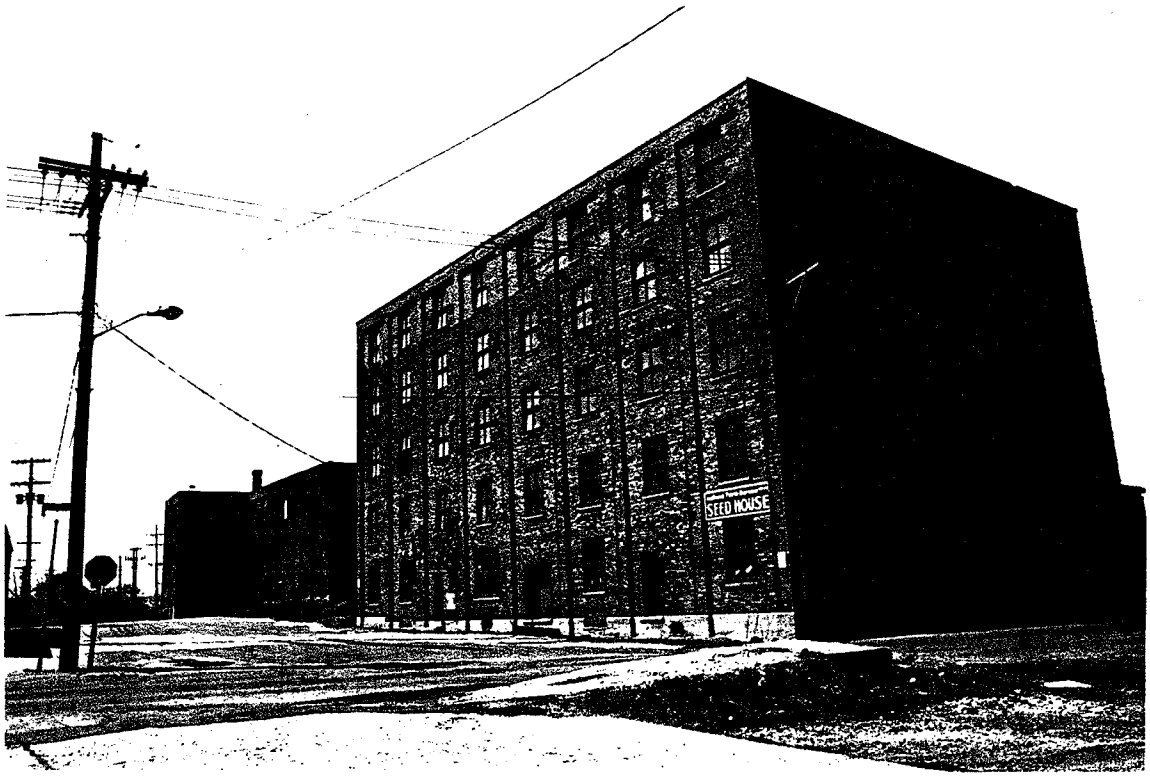
Photo 11
1. West side of Washington Street, north of Pike Street
6. camera facing northwest
7. 11 of 23

Photo 12
1. West side of Washington Street, north of Main Street
6. camera facing northwest
7. 12 of 23

Photo 13
1. West side of Washington Street, south of Market Street
6. camera facing southwest
7. 13 of 23

Photo 14
1. Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence
   225 N. Washington Street
6. camera facing southwest
7. 14 of 23

Photo 15
1. Carnegie Library
   222 S. Washington Street
6. camera facing northeast
7. 15 of 23



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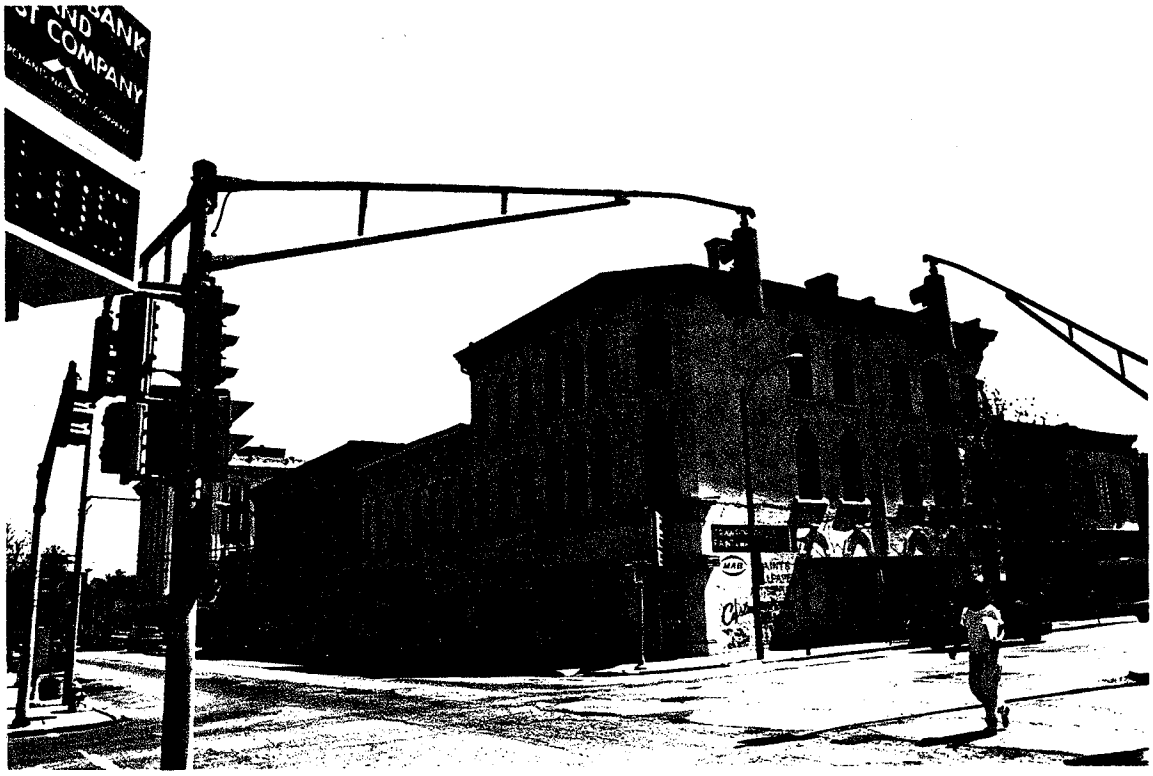

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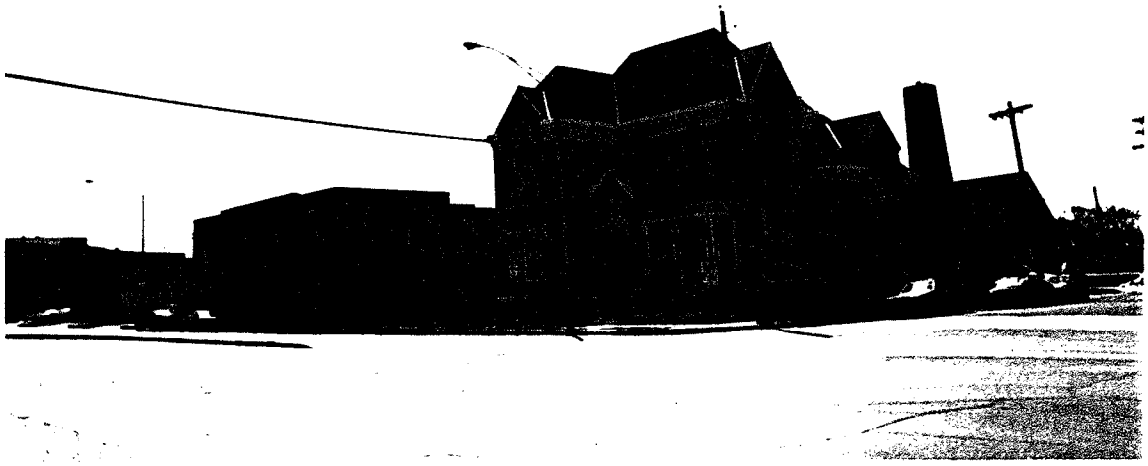

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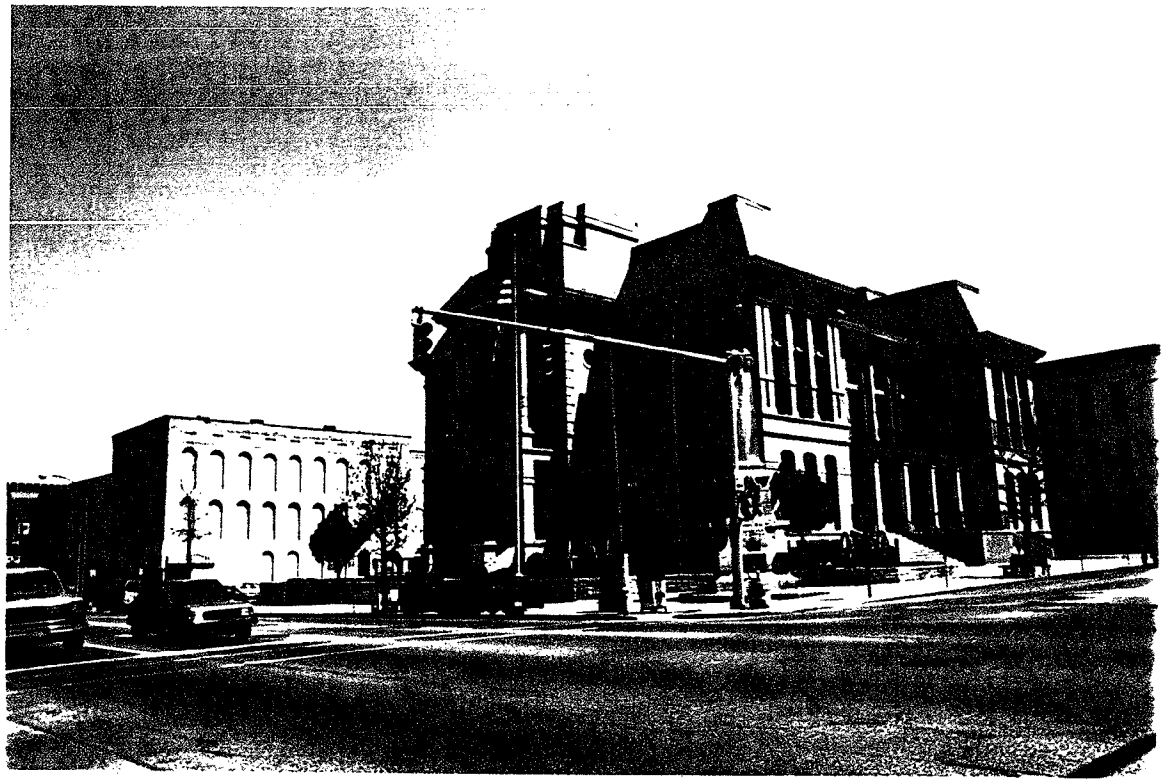

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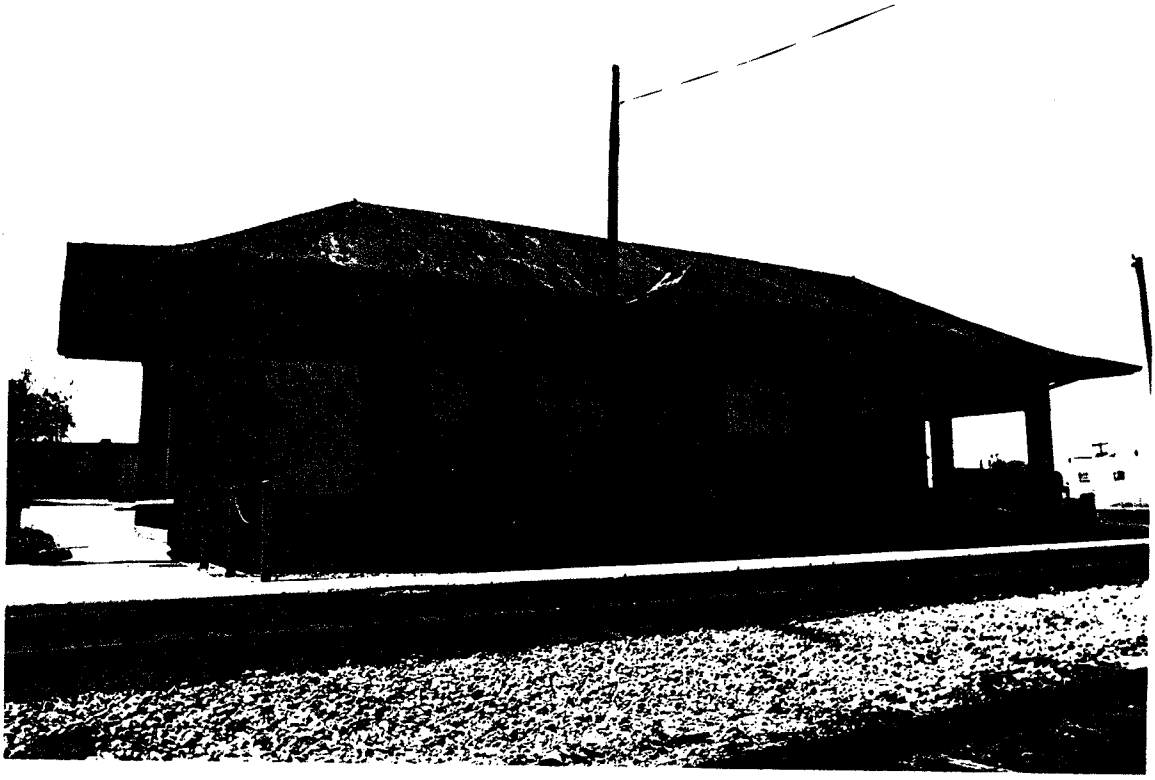

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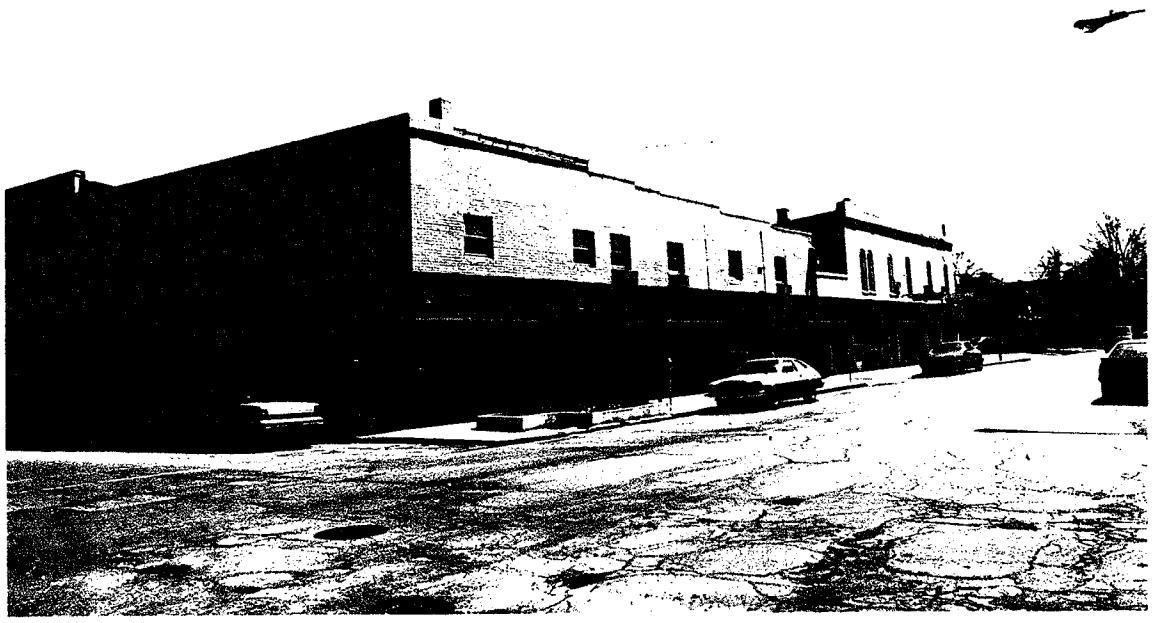

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#23