



NHL Executive Summary



Name of Property: Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence
City, State: Crawfordsville, Indiana
Period of Significance: 1882-1889
NHL Criteria: 4
NHL Theme: III. Expressing Cultural Values
5. Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Design
VI. Expanding Science and Technology

Previous Recognition: 1975, National Register of Historic Places
Historic American Engineering Record, HAER No. IN-17

National Historic Context: Architecture; Science and Technology

NHL Significance:

- The Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence is the earliest extant example of a Rotary Jail property type in the United States where a sheriff's residence is combined with a rotary jail in a single building envelope.
- An excellent example of a unique prison cell type that was invented as an economical alternative for the county jail system during the late 19th century.
- The unusual design of the jail exemplifies the use of technology to address



philosophical, economic, and social changes in rural America in the late 19th century.

- This building possesses the only remaining functional rotary mechanism.
- Property also contains an adjacent powerhouse that housed the boiler equipment for the jail and residence.

Integrity:

- The Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff’s Residence reflects the historic function, technology and aesthetics as originally designed by William H. Brown and E. J. Hodgson, with Haugh and Ketchum, in 1882.
- All the physical features of the property (form, massing, textures, patterning, materials, style, fenestration, and the overall craftsmanship) appear as they did during the period of significance and convey the intent, purpose, design, and character of this unique property, which served as the Montgomery County Jail from 1882 to June 1973.
- The rotary mechanism has been restored and now operates as it did during the period of significance.

Owner of Property: Montgomery County Cultural Foundation

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

Origins of Nomination: Study of the Rotary Jail property type was initiated by the NPS Midwest Regional Office. The study document, “Rotary Jails in the United States, 1882-1969: Assessment of Significance and National Historic Landmark Recommendations,” provides the larger historic context for this nomination.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: National recognition of a primarily rural/small community property type will bring attention to a resource that is generally unknown and under-represented. The nomination is supported by Indiana Landmarks, Inc., the State Historical Society of Indiana, and the City of Crawfordsville, Indiana.

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of August 21, 2023):

- Paul Diebold, Assistant Director of Preservation Services, Indiana State Historic Preservation Office
- Brittney Turpin, Executive Director, Montgomery County Cultural Foundation
- Kyliee Wills, Board President, Montgomery County Cultural Foundation
- Becky Hankins, Chair, City of Crawfordsville Historic Preservation Commission

Landmarks Committee Comments:

- Difficult to find the building on the location map so its marker should be improved.



Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence in Crawfordsville, Indiana, as a National Historic Landmark, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: The National Park System Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Montgomery County Jail and Sheriff's Residence in Crawfordsville, Indiana, as a National Historic Landmark.