

MONTGOMERY COUNTY Then & Now



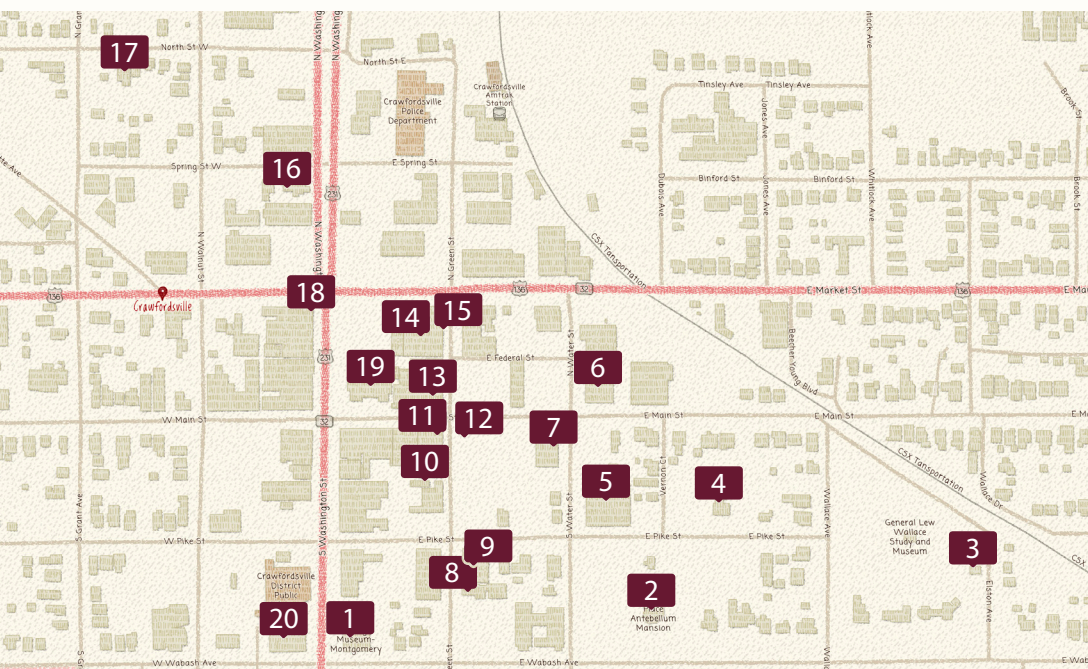
FULL INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE
AVAILABLE AT STORYMAPS.COM



For more than two hundred years, downtown Crawfordsville, Indiana has been a constant in the lives of residents and visitors to Montgomery County, Indiana. From its 1823 founding by Williamson Dunn, Henry Ristine, and Major Ambrose Whitlock to its current offerings for living, shopping, and working, the historic downtown Crawfordsville area has been an ever-changing place.

Early Crawfordsville was bustling with visitors coming to purchase land at the federal land office between 1823 and 1853. A period of rapid expansion and commercial prosperity began in the 1880s and lasted until about 1920. Most of the buildings on this tour were built during this time. While some buildings have been lost to time and change, the featured buildings bear witness to a robust community, both then and now.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 - Carnegie Library | 11 - Former Goodman's Department Store |
| 2 - Henry S. Lane Home | 12 - Elston Bank |
| 3 - General Lew Wallace Study | 13 - Crawfordsville State Bank |
| 4 - Elston Homestead | 14 - Former Armory / Journal Review |
| 5 - Crawfordsville Municipal Building | 15 - Otto Schlemmer Building |
| 6 - Post Office | 16 - Jail & Sheriff's Residence |
| 7 - Ben-Hur Life Building | 17 - Bethel AME Church |
| 8 - St. John's Episcopal Church | 18 - Francis & Mount |
| 9 - Former YMCA | 19 - Courthouse & War Memorial |
| 10 - Journal Building | 20 - Masonic Temple |





Carnegie Library

222 S. Washington Street | **RENAISSANCE REVIVAL, 1902**

1

Indiana's first Carnegie Library opened here in 1902. Local architect W. F. Sharpe designed this Renaissance Revival building, as well as the Masonic Temple across the street.



Henry S. Lane Home

212 S. Water Street | **GREEK REVIVAL, 1845**

2

This Greek Revival home was built by Senator Henry Smith Lane (1811–1881) and his wife, Joanna Elston Lane (1826–1914) in 1845. It has had several additions as well as pink exterior paint when it was renovated into an Italian villa!



General Lew Wallace Study

200 Wallace Avenue | **ROMANESQUE, 1895**

3

General Lew Wallace expressed a heartfelt dream—to create what he described as a “pleasure house of my soul.” This dream took shape as his study in 1895. As an author, he is best known for his epic *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* written in 1880.



Elston Homestead

400 E. Pike Street | **FEDERAL, 1835**

4

The Elston Homestead was Crawfordsville's first brick residence built for Major Isaac C. Elston (1794-1867). His business interests included a dry-goods store, land development, and founder and president of both a railroad company and a bank.



Crawfordsville Municipal Building

300 E. Pike Street | **NEOCLASSICAL, 1933**

5

Local architect Carroll Beeson designed this neoclassical building in 1933. The building housed all city services including fire, police, water, gas, and electric departments, as well as the Mayor and Clerk offices. The old city building was on N. Green St. and was demolished in 1936.



Post Office

300 E. Main Street | **ART DECO, 1940**

6

The U.S. Post Office in Crawfordsville was constructed in 1940 and was designed by nationally-known architect Louis Simon. Simon was the supervising architect in the U.S. Department of Treasury. The Art Deco building was one of many designs that could be easily executed in smaller communities.



Ben-Hur Life Building

227 E. Main Street | **NEOCLASSICAL, 1911**

7

The Ben-Hur Life building was the original home of the Supreme Tribe of Ben-Hur, a fraternal organization and mutual life insurance company. David W. Gerard founded the company in 1894, with the name adopted from the Lew Wallace novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of Christ*.



St. John's Episcopal Church

212 S. Green Street | **GREEK REVIVAL, 1837**

8

This church is Indiana's first Episcopal Church building and the oldest remaining church building in the city. It was built at the northwest corner of Market and Water Streets. In 1872, the building moved here, after being stuck in snow and mud for three months in the middle of Water Street.



Former YMCA

201 E. Pike Street | **ARTS & CRAFTS, 1913**

9

This 1913 building was the second home of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). The organization's short tenure in the building ended in 1928 when the YMCA closed. After a decade in receivership, the building became the Palmer Apartments in 1940.



Journal Building

119 S. Green Street | **ITALIANATE, 1892**

10

The Journal Building opened in 1893 and was the headquarters of the *Crawfordsville Journal*, a Republican newspaper established in 1848. The *Journal* merged with the *Crawfordsville Review* in 1929. The new *Journal Review* used this building until 1958 and then moved one block north to 119 N. Green St.



Former Goodman's Dept. Store

11

131 E. Main Street | **ART DECO, 1933**

The corner is best known as the origin of the 1933 fire that the *Journal Review* called the worst disaster in the town's history. The community rallied to rebuild, and this Art Deco building was completed by the end of the year. Goodman's Department Store returned to its original location.



Elston Bank

12

201 E. Main Street | **ITALIANATE, 1869**

This Elston bank building was built in 1869 to replace the original 1853 log cabin bank. It sits on the former site of the Elston family dry-goods store. General Lew Wallace's law office occupied the second floor corner office.



Crawfordsville State Bank

13

132 E. Main Street | **NEOCLASSICAL, ABOUT 1905**

Crawfordsville State Bank was incorporated in 1903. The name was proudly etched at the top of the building. The bank operated in this location until its acquisition by Elston Bank in 1927. Elston Bank was located on the southeast corner of the same intersection.



Former Armory / Journal Review

14

119 N. Green Street | **ART DECO, 1929**

The National Guard constructed this Art Deco building in 1929. Following its use as the Armory, the *Journal Review* published its newspaper from the building. Since the sale of the building in 2024, the building has been undergoing new development.

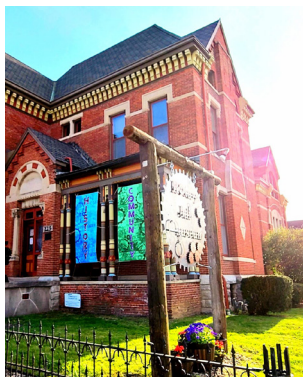


Otto Schlemmer Building

15

129 - 131 N. Green Street | **VICTORIAN RENAISSANCE, 1854 / 1889**

This building started life in 1854 as the Bennage Block and was one of the first brick commercial structures downtown. Otto Schlemmer, the owner of the building when it was renovated in 1889, raised the roof and made extensive revisions to the building's façade.



Jail & Sheriff's Residence

16

225 N. Washington Street | **ROMANESQUE REVIVAL, 1882**

The jail, designed by W. H. Brown and built by the Haugh Ketchum Steel Co. in 1881, began housing inmates in 1882. The jail was the first of eighteen built in the United States using this design and is the only Rotary Jail in the country that continues to mechanically function.



Bethel AME Church

17

213 W. North Street | **QUEEN ANNE, 1892**

The current Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1892. Behind it, in the original building, the basement sheltered freedom seekers on the Underground Railroad. Pastor Nelson Patterson and church members worked with abolitionist neighbor John Allen Speed to assist escapees in their quest for liberty.



Francis & Mount

18

131 N. Washington Street | **ITALIANATE, ABOUT 1880**

The Willis Grocery operated here in the 1910s. By 1924, William A. Francis and Joseph Mount owned the business. Their business would span six decades. The current proprietors opened their eatery in 2018, naming it "Francis & Mount" to honor the longstanding store on the site.



Courthouse & War Memorial

19

100 E. Main Street | **SECOND EMPIRE, 1876**

The 1876 Montgomery County Courthouse is one of six courthouses in the state designed by George Bunting. On the corner is the War Memorial. Rudolf Schwartz designed the 1906 stone and bronze sculpture. He is best known as the designer of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Indianapolis.



Masonic Temple

20

221 S. Washington Street | **NEOCLASSICAL, 1902**

This is the third home for the Masons in the city. The fraternal organization began in 1844, making it the oldest continuously operating community organization in the county. The building was designed by local architect and Mason William F. Sharpe and built by contractor W.P. Junglaus.