

DAVID H. REMLEY ROAD BRIDGE
(Montgomery County Bridge 88)
Spanning Sugar Creek on County Road 225 West
Crawfordsville Vicinity
Montgomery County
Indiana

HAER No. IN-77

HAER
IND
54-CRAVI.V,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Northeast Region
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

DAVID H. REMLEY ROAD BRIDGE
(MONTGOMERY COUNTY BRIDGE 88)

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54-CRAVI.V,
2-

Location: Spanning Sugar Creek on County Road 225
West, 2.25 miles west of Crawfordsville,
Indiana and 1.4 miles south of U.S. 136.
Crawfordsville vicinity
Montgomery County
Indiana

UTM: 16.504580.4432100
QUAD: Crawfordsville, Indiana

Date of
Construction: 1913

Construction
Company: The Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company of
Elkhart

Present Owner: Montgomery County
Montgomery County Commissioners
Montgomery County Courthouse
Crawfordsville, IN 47933

Present Use: Vehicular and pedestrian traffic

Significance: The David H. Remley Bridge is the longest
known Pratt through span in Indiana. It
was built by the prolific Elkhart Bridge
and Iron Company of Elkhart.

Project Information: This documentation was undertaken in
December, 1992, in accordance with the
Memorandum of Agreement by the Montgomery
County Board of Commissioners, Indiana
Department of Transportation and the
Federal Highway Administration as a
mitigative measure prior to the demolition
and replacement of the bridge.

Aaron Davenport
BUTLER, FAIRMAN and SEUFERT, INC.
9405 Delegates Row
Indianapolis, IN 46240

The David H. Remley Road Bridge spans Sugar Creek which flows through Montgomery County in a northeast to southwest direction. Riparian woods line the majority of Sugar Creek making it a picturesque stream to canoe in Indiana. The south top of bank at the bridge is similar to many sections of Sugar Creek in Montgomery County in that it is 62 feet higher than the meandering waterway. The south approach is cut through this high bank which requires the motorist to negotiate reverse curves prior to the opening of the bridge. The area north of the bridge is comprised of pasture and agricultural row crops. The natural drainage of the area is towards Sugar Creek.

The David H. Remley Road Bridge is a single span, pin connected, steel through Pratt truss. The structure was built by the Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company of Elkhart, Indiana in 1913 for a cost of \$5,000. This bridge is the longest known Pratt through span in Indiana. The David H. Remley Road Bridge has intermediate verticals of laced channels which subdivide the 200 foot truss into most of its twelve panels. Pairs of die forged and rectangular eyebars provide the diagonals that stretch toward center span from the top panel point to the bottom of all except the end post panels. Cylindrical eyebars with turnbuckles counter the other eyebars in the three most central panels. I-floor beams are riveted to pin and vertical plates below the lower chord which supports the concrete deck with its 16 foot 7 inch roadway and 20 foot 2 inches of vertical clearance. The bridge is seated upon concrete abutments and wingwalls.

The David H. Remley Road Bridge is rather unadorned but still retains its original members, including decoratively latticed (single X pattern) guardrail. High, heavy and long, this truss is nonetheless pin connected and relies considerably upon eyebars.

The existing bridge plaques (intact-south, badly damaged-north) identifies the year and builder of the bridge as follows:

1913
ELKHART
BRIDGE & IRON CO.
ELKHART, IND.

Available activities at this historic property include sightseeing, (looking at and away from the bridge), fishing and swimming. The area is also heavily used by canoeists. Only sightseeing is related to the historic nature of the bridge, though. No historic photographs of the bridge were found.

It was originally thought that a covered bridge may have existed at this location and possibly destroyed by the 1913 flood.

However, according to Montgomery County Legend and Lore, there were only seven covered bridges built and used in Montgomery County, none of which were described at this location. Additionally, The Crawfordsville Journal on April 1, 1913 reported that "no bridges were swept away" due to the flooding. The Montgomery County Commissioner's Records indicate that a Petition for Highway Improvement was submitted by David H. Remley (local property owner) et al. to the county auditor on August 15, 1912. The notice of Petition for Improvement of a public Highway in Union Township, Montgomery County, Indiana read as follows:

"Notice is hereby given to the citizens and voters of Union Township, Montgomery County, Indiana, that David H. Remley and others have filed in the office of the Auditor of said county a petition asking for the improvement of a certain highway in said township in pursuance of the statutes of such state governing the construction and improvement of highways not exceeding three miles in length; that such petition was filed on the 15th day of August, 1912."

Bids for the David H. Remley Road were opened on November 6, 1912. The contract was awarded to Frank A. Gagbey. The superintendent named was John Brothers, Jr., and the Engineer for construction was the Montgomery County Surveyor, Milton L. Nees. The Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company were subcontracted by Mr. Gagbey.

The Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company, builders of the David H. Remley Road Bridge, was first incorporated as the Elkhart Bridge Company in November, 1901. After several years of struggling, the firm was sold to the new company in 1906. By 1910 the company's plant covered 17,300 square feet and housed 125 employees, who fabricated 4,000 tons of steel and earned \$40,000 annually. The Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company constructed many bridges in Indiana, many states west of Indiana and also in Canada. Bridges constructed by this prolific firm ranged from 6 feet to 500 feet and cost \$25 to \$30,000. One significant feat performed by the Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company was that they erected each structure at the shop prior to shipping it off to be erected. Also, at least one of the firm's executives inspected every job performed by each of its dozen erection crews.

The Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company maintained several draftsmen and engineers but for the exceptional contract where a structure was "built to order," the company turned to outside architects. Some projects were engineered by state highway engineers. The Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company also diverged from solely bridge construction in 1907 to the fabrication of buildings, which provided a gradually increasing percentage of its business.

On August 21, 1914 the superintendent and the engineer for construction both reported to the Board of Commissioners that the work on the David H. Remley Road was complete and requested final payment to the contractor. Upon inspection of the Auditor's Claim Records for 1913 and 1914, the bridge was never specifically purchased. Payments were made over this period to F.A. Gagbey and not to the Elkhart Bridge and Iron Company.

The bridge became locally known, subsequent to the completion of construction, as the Lettuce Farm Bridge and/or the Morris and Jack Bridge due to a farm owned by Morris and Jack located on the corner in the road just south of the bridge. These names were never logged in any historical records but were mentioned by local residents familiar with the area. No other information concerning these names were located.

No records were found which described any special conditions or technology in the construction of The David H. Remley Road Bridge. Machinery and tools were probably similar to those used by other bridge manufacturers of that time.

No significant events or persons are known to be connected with this bridge. The bridge was constructed as part of a highway improvement project in which several local residents petitioned the County Commissioners to improve access in several areas in the county. Local and regional economic and social conditions were not significantly affected by the construction of any one bridge in this part of the county. However, collectively, the bridges spanning Sugar Creek provided shorter travel distances, thus decreasing trip time and costs for travellers, farmers and later, motorists, in the central and western portions of Montgomery County.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bridge Nameplate

Montgomery County Commission Records
Montgomery County Commissioners
Montgomery County Courthouse
Crawfordsville, IN 47993

Montgomery County Historical Society
Lane Place
212 South Water Street
Crawfordsville, IN 47933

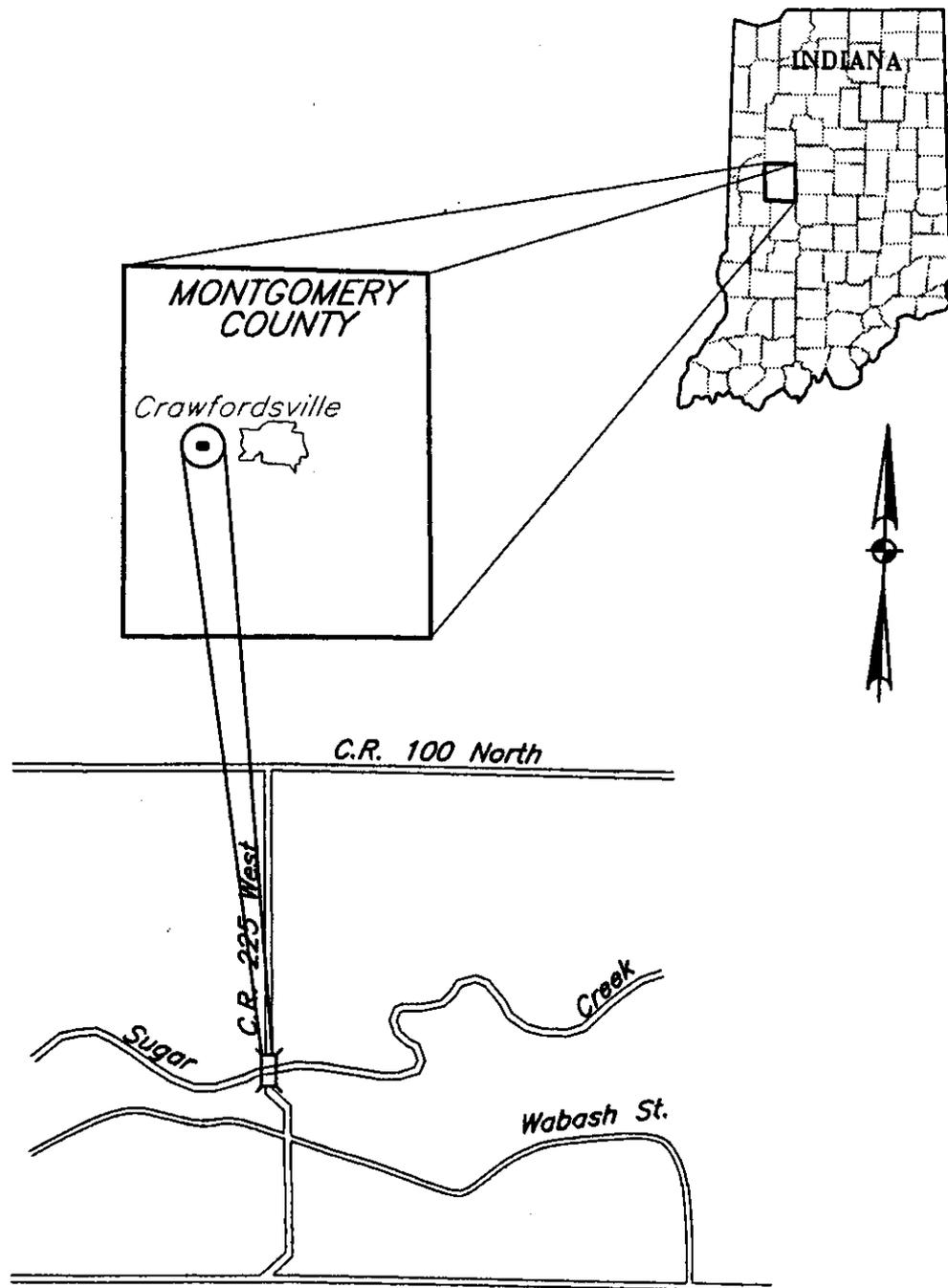
Butler, Fairman and Seufert, Inc., Bridge Inspection/Reinspection Report: Montgomery County, (Indianapolis, 1973, 1978, 1980-1992)

Indiana Historic Sites & Structures Inventory, Montgomery County: Interim Report (Indianapolis, 1986), 30, 33

Cline, Pat, Montgomery County Legend and Lore, Montgomery County Historical Society, Crawfordsville, 1988, pg. 77.

The Crawfordsville Journal, April 1, 1913

DAVID H. REMLEY ROAD BRIDGE
(MONTGOMERY COUNTY BRIDGE 88)
HAER NO. IN-77 (PAGE 6)



SITE
LOCATION MAP

Scale: 1"=2000'