1. Name of Property
   Historic name: Covington Jail
   Other names/site number: N/A
   Name of related multiple property listing: Calaboose (Tiny Jails) in Oklahoma 1904 - 1940

2. Location
   Street & number: 514 W. Main St.
   City or town: Covington
   State: Oklahoma
   County: Garfield
   Vicinity: N/A

3. State/Federal Agency Certification
   As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I
   recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
   ___ national ___ statewide X local
   Applicable National Register Criteria:
   X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

   Signature of certifying official/Title: ____________________ Date ____________________

   State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government
   In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

   Signature of commenting official: ____________________ Date ____________________

   Title: ____________________ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification
I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain:) _____________________

Signature of the Keeper: ___________________ Date of Action: ___________________
Number of Resources within Property  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

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Number of contributing resources previously in the National Register ____0_____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Government/Correctional Facility

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

Vacant/Not in use
7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)
__No Style___________

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)
Principal exterior materials of the property: _Concrete__________

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a summary paragraph that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The Covington Jail is a one-story, two-room jail building with a flat concrete roof with square parapets at each corner and a half-round arch at the front center facade. The jail’s walls are of formed concrete that is painted white with “JAIL” stenciled above the entry door. Covington’s jail was built ca. 1921 by local citizen H.L. Lipsey and is approximately 180 square feet in area and 102” in height. The south elevation of the jail has a centered single-entry metal bar door. The metal bar door is flanked on each side by two rectangular ventilation openings with six vertical round metal bars each. Two rectangular ventilation openings are located at the north (back) elevation. The interior contains two individual rooms that are divided in the middle by a small hall/entryway. Both rooms have metal bar entry doors. The building maintains a high degree of integrity in location, setting, design, materials, and workmanship as a free-standing two-room, formed concrete jail that exemplifies local community planning and development and law.
Narrative Description

Site and Setting

The Covington Jail is an excellent example of a two-room jail built of formed concrete at the beginning of the 1920s in Oklahoma. The building has a concrete floor, concrete walls with the exterior painted white, metal bar doors, and a flat concrete roof with square parapets and a half-round decorative arch above the entry door. There is a single, metal bar entry door at the south elevation with a keyed security padlock. The building sits approximately fifteen feet north of the road (Main St.) and features a recent addition of a poured concrete walkway that continues around the perimeter of the building. There is a manufactured double-wide home, a detached double-car garage, and a detached metal carport immediately to the northwest of the jail.

Exterior

The centered entry door on south elevation is 82” tall by 35” wide. The entry door is wood framed with flat metal bars that are riveted at each section. Two small rectangular ventilation openings approximately 4’ from grade flank each side of the entry door. The ventilation openings are wood-framed and contain six vertical round metal bars each. Each ventilation opening is approximately 20.5” in length and 14” in height.

The west and east side elevations of the jail are void of any openings.

Two small rectangular ventilation openings are present at the north (rear) elevation. Each ventilation opening is wood framed and approximately 20.5” in length by 14” in height. The openings are approximately from 4’ from grade and 29” from the corner. The west opening (facing north) contains six vertical round metal bars, while the east opening (facing north) contains five vertical round metal bars.

Interior

The interior is common of most two-room jails from this period with a concrete floor and two cells divided by a center hall area that served as an office area for the police officer. The center hall contains a wood burning stove that would have been used for heating the jail and is void of any other furnishings. The stove at some point was converted to gas. The center hall is 56.5” wide and 107” in length. Both cells are accessed through riveted metal bar doors with each cell containing a ceramic toilet and metal framed cots with collapsible legs that mount to the wall via eye hooks. The interior doors are 71.5” in height and 30” in width. Both rooms are 107” in length and 64” wide.
The ceiling of the Covington Jail is concrete. Gas, electrical, and plumbing were installed at one point and are currently not functional.

Integrity

The Covington Jail retains a high degree of integrity that conveys significance as a free-standing, two room jail of formed concrete, and is an excellent example of rural Oklahoma’s early methods of community planning and development as it pertains to law enforcement. The building remains in its original location and retains its original function as the city’s jail. The three entry doors were replaced with the current metal bar doors for extra security in 1930. The interior remains unaltered with the exception of the later addition of two toilets, gas, electrical, and water lines in 1947 to meet required state inspection laws. The Covington Jail clearly conveys historic significance as the town’s holding facility and is an excellent example of a two-room formed concrete municipal jail.
8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark “x” in all the boxes that apply.)

☐ 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 old or achieving significance within the past 50 years
Covington Jail

Name of Property

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

- Community Planning and Development, Law
- Architecture

Period of Significance
- c. 1921 – 1960

Significant Dates
- Built c. 1921

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
- H.L. Lipsey - Builder

Garfield County, Oklahoma

County and State
Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Covington Jail in Garfield County, Oklahoma, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A: Community Planning and Development, and Law. Constructed ca. 1921 by local citizen H.L. Lipsey, the jail was maintained and used up until the early 1960s as a holding cell for the community of Covington. The Covington Jail represents the historic significance of rural communities needs for secured correctional facilities during Oklahoma’s prohibition and oil boom eras. The period of significance begins ca. 1921 and extends to 1960, when jails across rural communities began to be phased out. The jail is also eligible for the National Register under Criterion C: Two-Room Jail, as an excellent example of a 1920s municipal jail. While simple in design, the building clearly expresses its function through its form.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

A combination of prohibition laws as a condition of statehood in 1907 until passage of the Liquor Control Act in 1959, along with the consistent influx of rough and rowdy oilfield workers seeking employment in the numerous rural boomtowns created a pressing need for holding facilities to house local law breakers across Oklahoma. It was during this period that Oklahoma would see an increase in construction of locally contracted tiny jails, or calabooses, in rural communities. The majority of these calabooses were typically built next to the town water tower, city hall, or other public works buildings, however, it was not unusual as in the case with the Covington Jail as detailed on the 1920 Sanborn Insurance Map, for communities to construct their local jail within close proximity of railways or other transportation hubs, assumably for a quick ride out of town for the lawbreakers and to keep the incarcerated a safe distance from its citizens. Research has established that almost every townsite had at one point established a one or two-room calaboose to contain either local petty criminals or prisoner transfers awaiting extradition to larger federal or county prisons.

Most early jails were typically of wood construction or in some cases, locally quarried rock. While lumber made for a quick solution for communities in need of secure holding facilities, the organic material proved to be a temporary and unstable material as numerous instances of these jails being burned down are recorded in newspaper articles across the state. Many communities

2 Sanborn and Clarkson insurance maps detailed U.S. cities and townsites in the 19th and 20th centuries to help insurance companies’ assess potential risks involved with underwriting policies. [https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn07050_001/](https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn07050_001/)
would begin the process of replacing wood frame jails with one and two-room formed concrete holding facilities that proved much more durable and secure.³

**Criterion A: Community Planning and Development, Law**

Established along the Arkansas Valley and Western Railways and opened by the Cherokee Strip Land Run of 1893, the originally named postal designation of Tripp, Oklahoma Territory, would change to Covington (after homesteader John Covington) by 1903, and by statehood in 1907 would possess a population of 133 residents. The bustling new town in southeastern Garfield County would see agriculture and the abundant wheat crops as the initial driving force of its economy, and by 1909 Covington would have two implement dealers, two lumber companies, and three elevators in operation.⁴ The first oil boom would hit the area in 1917 with numerous wells being drilled in the Garber-Covington oil fields, and in 1920 Covington’s population would reach 1,283 as a result of the prosperous economy. With the prosperity came the lawlessness as Covington’s citizens would witness in August 1926 when the towns two banks were both robbed on the same day by the notorious Kimes brothers, George and Matt. Twenty-four locals were locked in the banks vaults while the brothers made off with the towns funds.⁵

Numerous records for the Covington Jail exist through newspaper articles and maps. A September 18, 1919, article in the Oklahoma Hornet describes local resident H.L. Lipsey as beginning new work on the concrete jail just west of Hoy’s shop, and how the town had “been without a jail these several years” since a tramp had set the original lockup on fire.⁶ While the 1900 Clarkson Insurance maps and records for Covington do not list any holding facilities,⁷ Sanborn Fire Insurance maps for 1920 depict a wood frame jail that sat directly in front of the current jail at the south elevation and next to the road. The next available Sanborn maps show the concrete jail in place by 1929 and the older wood frame jail as non-extant.⁸

Jail reform and the public outcry for more humane and sanitary holding facilities began almost immediately after statehood in 1907. Oklahoma’s first female elected state official Kate Barnard served as Oklahoma’s first Commissioner of Charities and Corrections from 1907 to 1915.⁹

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⁴ Federal Writers’ Project Collection 1935-1942, Oklahoma Historical Society Research Division, M1981.105 location 9032.02, Box 83

⁵ Dianna Everett, *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, Covington, Oklahoma Historical Society, [https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=CO075#text=The%20town%20is%20named%20for%20Wolf](https://www.okhistory.org/publications/enc/entry?entry=CO075#text=The%20town%20is%20named%20for%20Wolf)

⁶ The Oklahoma Hornet, September 18, 1919, [www.Newspapers.com](http://www.Newspapers.com)

⁷ The Clarkson Insurance map boundaries did not extend to the area where both the original and current jail are located. Clarkson Insurance Maps, Covington June 1905, [https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc963920/](https://gateway.okhistory.org/ark:/67531/metadc963920/)

⁸ Sanborn Insurance Maps, [https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn07050_001/](https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn07050_001/)

1908 Barnard released the First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Charities and Corrections describing the less than sanitary conditions for most of Oklahoma’s holding facilities, and noted that most city jails lacked provisions for water, night buckets, or beds, and in most cases, they, “being full of filth and cobwebs, with the only available bedding consisting of a few old rags or straw thrown on the floor.”¹⁰ Mabel Bassett would carry the torch of jail reform and serve as Oklahoma’s Commissioner of Charities and Corrections from 1923 to 1947. During her time in office, Bassett would make waves speaking out against practices such as tying inmates to trees or hitching posts and pushed for rural communities to replace outdated and unsafe wood frame calabooses with more modern and secure municipal jails.¹¹ The community leaders of Covington would replace their outdated jail with a more modern and secure concrete holding facility by 1921 and 26 years later in 1947 would again make improvements with the addition of plumbing and electricity. The community leaders would then notify Commissioner Bassett for full details in order to pass state inspection laws.¹²

The Covington Jail would also find use as a shelter for more than just the local lawbreaker needing a night to sleep it off. In December of 1921, six boys who had stowed away on a freight train in route to Tulsa found themselves put off the train in the middle of winter with nowhere to stay for warmth. Covington’s town Marshall Eierman and Town Justice Coberly allowed the boys to stay the night in the jail and were then furnished breakfast the next morning compliments of Moore’s restaurant before they continued their journey east. The boys commented that they, “would always have a warm feeling for Covington for the consideration shown them.”¹³ In December of 1924, the jail would shelter a stranded family whose car had broken down and left them no choice but to hunker down in a tent near the Covington Refinery. Town Marshall Andrew Wershing swept the jail out and warmed it up for the family until a house was provided for them later the next day.¹⁴

Oklahoma’s stringent prohibition laws were the driving force behind the building of these tiny jails. Alcohol sales were prohibited as part of the state constitutional requirements in 1907 and would last until 1959 when citizens passed the Liquor Control Act.¹⁵ Local municipalities made use of local labor to build small holding facilities of modest design that would be used for the purpose of allowing the offenders to sleep it off more often than for holding dangerous and hardened criminals. On August 31, 1928, the jail in Covington received an unexpected cleaning by one such intoxicated guest who, to the surprise of local deputies the next morning, had turned the water hydrant that had been installed for drinking purposes on and allowed to fill the jail with

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¹⁰ Kate Barnard, First annual report of the Commissioner of Charities and Corrections of the State of Oklahoma for the year ending December 31, 1908, 47, https://digitalprairie.ok.gov/digital/collection/okresources/id/2801
ankle deep water. Records also indicate that in March of 1930, Covington’s jail was used to store one-hundred gallons of confiscated moonshine until the next day where a good number of local citizens were present at the “burying” exercises to eliminate the distilled spirits. The whiskey in its charred kegs was noted as “first grade moonshine” by those who sampled it.

**Criterion C: Two-Room Jail**

The Covington Jail is a small, concrete building that is architecturally significant not only to the town of Covington, but also statewide in that it is the only known two-room formed concrete jail with decorative parapets and half-arch on its flat concrete roof. The Covington Jail is unique in design with its centered, single-entry door that opens into a narrow hallway that divides the two holding cells. One other jail, the two-room jail in Chouteau also features this interior floor plan, however, it exhibits a barrel roof and ventilation openings at the side and rear elevations. Other two-room formed concrete jails typically contain a hallway or office space for the town deputy at the front of the building with a wall separating the two cells.

Most of Covington’s historic buildings along its red bricked Main Street are no longer occupied or extant, including the Odd Fellow’s Lodge and Rooming House built in 1920 that originally served as one of two hotels in town and sat directly east of the jail. The two-story red brick building contained a large dance hall on the second floor and later served as the Covington City Hall. While the Odd Fellow’s Lodge and other significant buildings along Main Street have been razed, Covington’s jail remains architecturally unchanged since its inception in 1921 and stands as one of the few remaining buildings from that era in the town’s history to hold its architectural integrity.

With the growth of rural communities came the need for properly secured holding facilities which in turn meant a switch from crudely erected wood frame to concrete and native stone buildings. While lacking any definitive architectural style or detail, the Covington Jail illustrates functional construction and the town’s efforts in providing the community with a reliable and safe holding facility. The rough finished walls, metal doors and bars, and lack of ornamental details exemplify the gravity of the jails intentions as a deterrent to crime in the community. The jail served its purpose of securely holding local offenders while reflecting the growth of the municipality and its environment.

9. **Major Bibliographical References**

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)


Federal Writers’ Project Collection 1935-1942, Oklahoma Historical Society Research Division, M1981.105 location 9032.02, Box 83


Previous documentation on file (NPS):

____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
____ 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 #________
____ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #________

Primary location of additional data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
____ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
    Name of repository: _______________________________________

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): ____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property  Less than 1 acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
Datum if other than WGS84: __________
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 36.30601  Longitude: -97.59216

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 18 Block 33. Covington, Garfield County, Oklahoma. SE/4 11-21N-4W
Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries include the property historically associated with the jail and is based on information provided by the Garfield County Assessors Office.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title:    Michael Mayes. Survey Coordinator and State Register Coordinator
organization:  OK/SHPO
street & number:  800 Nazih Zuhdi Drive
city or town:  Oklahoma City state:  OK zip code:  73105
e-mail:  michael.mayes@history.ok.gov
telephone:  405-522-6024
date:  February 28, 2024

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:**  A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Additional items:**  (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn’t need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log
Covington Jail

Name of Property: _Covington Jail____

City or Vicinity: Covington

County: Garfield     State: Oklahoma

Photographer: Michael Mayes______

Date Photographed: February 26, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

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Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.
Covington Jail is located in Covington, Garfield County, Oklahoma. U.S. Highway 74 is less than one-half mile east of the jail. Enid, the seat of Garfield County is approximately 17 miles northwest of Covington.
Covington Jail is approximately 20 yards north of W. Main St. between 5th and 6th streets. There are grain elevators located southeast of the jail, and a modular home with detached garage and barn directly to the northwest.
Photo Key

(not to scale)
Covington Jail
Name of Property
Garfield County, Oklahoma
County and State
Calabooses (Tiny Jails) in Oklahoma
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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Name of Property
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County and State
Calaboooses (Tiny Jails) in Oklahoma
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Photographs Page 2

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Name of Property
Garfield County, Oklahoma

County and State
Calabouses (Tiny Jails) in Oklahoma

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

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### Covington Jail

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**County and State:** Calabooses (Tiny Jails) in Oklahoma  
**Name of multiple listing (if applicable):**

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**Name of Property**
Garfield County, Oklahoma

**County and State**

**Calaboooses (Tiny Jails) in Oklahoma**

**Name of multiple listing (if applicable)**

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet  

Section number  Photographs  Page  6  

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Covington Jail

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**Name of Property**
Garfield County, Oklahoma

**County and State**
Calabooses (Tiny Jails) in Oklahoma

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## National Register of Historic Places
### Covington Jail
**Location:** Garfield County, Oklahoma
**Type:** Calaboose (Tiny Jails) in Oklahoma

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Name of Property
Garfield County, Oklahoma
County and State
Calabosees (Tiny Jails) in Oklahoma
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number  Photographs  Page  10

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