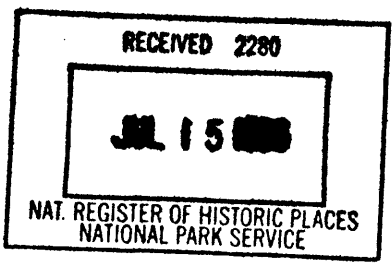


NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
Wisconsin Word Processor Format (1331D)  
(Approved 3/87)



OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only archival paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

1. Name of Property

---

historic name Richter, Charles Samuel, House

---

other names/site number Le Maison Granit

---

2. Location

---

street & number 55, 103, 105 Underwood Avenue N/A not for publication

---

city, town Montello N/A vicinity

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state Wisconsin code WI county Marquette code 077 zip code 53949

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3. Classification

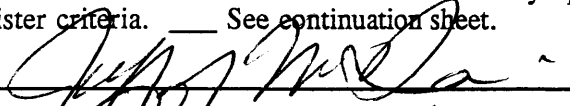
Ownership of Property		Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
			contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)			
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district		<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		<u>      </u>	<u>1</u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
			<u>5</u>	<u>6</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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.

  
Signature of certifying official  
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

7/27/96  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

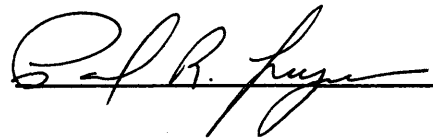
Signature of commenting official/title

Date

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): \_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8-16-96  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

P. R. Feyer Signature of the Keeper

Date

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/hotel

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

LANDSCAPE/garden

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

LANDSCAPE/garden

7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

foundation

CONCRETE

walls

GRANITE

roof

CERAMIC TILE

other

WOOD

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Introduction

Located in the City of Montello, Marquette County, the Charles Samuel Richter House features Period Georgian Revival stylistic influences and local granite construction. In addition to the main house, the approximately 2.4 acres of the Richter lot also contains eight free-standing buildings: two guest houses; a modern, single-car garage; an historic, two-car garage with attached chauffeur's quarters; and four sheds. One structure, a modern wood deck, is also present. The entire historic landscape is considered a contributing site. Due to the lot's heavy foliage and raised site, only the main house and one of the guest houses are readily visible from adjoining public areas, in particular, the Montello County Courthouse. To the north is Montello Lake, and to the immediate west is a Christian cemetery. The surrounding areas to the east and south are urban.

*Charles Samuel Richter House (55 Underwood Avenue) 1909-1911 C Map No. 1*

Exterior

The Colonial Revival Richter House (1909-1911) is situated on a small hill overlooking Montello's central business district (see Photo 1). It shares its prominent location with the 1916 Marquette County Courthouse (NRHP 3-9-82), which stands immediately to the east.

The two-story Richter House is rectangular, with exterior walls of heavy, rough-hewn Montello Granite facing--its most salient design feature. The load-bearing walls are brick. Modern ceramic tile covers the gabled roof. Viewed from Underwood Avenue, the main thoroughfare past the house, the building's principal--or southwest--facade appears nearly symmetrical; a one-story sunporch attached to the southeast end destroys the otherwise rigid symmetry (see Photo 2). On the first floor, two sets of eight-over-eight, double-hung sash windows flank an elaborate entry porch. Each has a white-painted wood frame, and an ashlar lintel with exaggerated keystone. Beneath these are four small basement windows, each of which is topped by a similar ashlar lintel. The concrete foundation, shown in the historic blueprints, is not visible.

X See continuation sheet

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The entry porch, with a segmental pediment supported by highly polished Tuscan columns of Montello Granite, projects from the center of the composition (see Photo 3). The base of the porch is granite-faced, but the rest is wood. The pediment is roofed with copper. The front door, with eight in-set lights, is flanked by narrow, vertical windows, and topped with a transom. Two granite pilasters also flank the entrance. The entire porch is slightly raised, and reached by several steps.

The second-story of the main facade incorporates two pairs of eight-over-eight, double-hung sash windows which correspond in location to those on the first level. Vertically, these are slightly smaller than the ones below. Above the entry porch at center is a door which leads onto a small balcony with flower boxes built into the low parapets; two windows with decorative leaded glass flank this door. The second-story fenestration lacks the stone lintels seen on the first: the top of each window pushes into the wood frieze above, causing a stringcourse which runs along the facade to conform to its shape, and leaving insufficient room for such a lintel.

Historic photographs indicate the former presence of a row of modillion brackets on the cornice beneath the overhang of the roof. Although these have been removed, the sparingly decorated, wood cornice is largely intact. It is painted white, with brown horizontal bands. Downspouts, running from the cornice to the ground, are seen in the original blueprints and period images but no longer exist. Of the Richter House's four facades, the front is by far the most formal and architecturally interesting.

The southeast end of the house, like the main facade, is highly visible to passers-by; therefore, it too is more formal and plastic than the other, less conspicuous facades (see Photo 4). Most prominently it features the one-story, projecting sun porch. The lower third of this porch is granite-faced, like most of the rest of the house, but the upper part is a nearly continuous band of fenestration: two three-over-three light double-hung sashes (southwest, front side); four pairs--each pair separated by a mullion--of two two-over-two sashes (southeast end); and finally, one three-over-three sash and a door (northeast, rear side). According to blueprints, all of these were intended to be inward-swinging casement windows; why sash windows were used instead is unclear. The window frames, mullions, and cornice are wood, and the hipped roof is tile.

The second floor of the southeast facade, above the sun porch, continues the use of granite-facing, but symmetry is now all but lost. Two windows identical to those on the main facade's second story--yet incorporating the same type of lintels used over first-story windows--flank a small, off-center, four-over-four double-hung sash window. Within the attic space of the broken pediment above is a Palladian casement window, slightly recessed.

If the front of the Richter House is its most public facade, then the northeast, rear facade is undoubtedly its private counterpart. It is certainly less formal, with asymmetrical fenestration that reflects the utilitarian interior layout of the house. Most unusual is a pair of irregularly-shaped, fixed, art-glass windows on the first story--one the mirror image of the other. Both have ashlar granite lintels, and are separated by approximately ten feet of wall. Original blueprints indicate that between these two windows "lattice work was securely fastened to the wall": this is no longer extant. The corresponding interior space is that of the living room. Here, each irregular window pierces the wall above a built-in bookshelf. These, in turn, flank a grand, brick and granite fireplace. Although its chimney punctuates the roofline, no other evidence of the fireplace is revealed externally. Two other double-hung, sash windows are also present on the first floor of the northeast wall: one three-over-three light, the other four-over-four. The latter window has an ashlar lintel similar to those on the front of the house; this is not shown on the original plans, but is probably historic. Three small windows offer light to rooms in the basement. A rear entry porch, located off-axis from the front porch, contains both fixed casement and sash windows. Its hipped roof is tiled like the other roofs. Recessed into the ground adjacent to the porch is a trap door, covering stairs that access the service areas of the basement.

The rear facade's second story is more mundane than the one below. Windows are similar to those on the upper floor of the main facade: four-over-four, double-hung sashes. The middle of the three is slightly smaller, due to the

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encroaching presence of the back porch. The wood frieze and cornice from the front are also carried around to the back. On the tiled roof, a granite-faced, brick chimney with granite details extends through the rear part of the gable.

The Richter House's northwest end is the least noteworthy, architecturally. The first floor incorporates two four-over-four light, double-hung sashes--smaller than other first-story windows because they pierce the kitchen walls over the sink and counters--and a single eight-over-eight sash, similar to corresponding windows on the main facade. Three small windows open to basement service rooms. The second floor and attic of this facade are nearly identical to those of the opposite side, except in that there is no small, middle window, and ashlar lintels are not present.

The exterior of the Richter House retains a high degree of integrity. With the exception of changes already noted--the elimination of cornice brackets and downspouts--the only significant alteration has been the removal of a second chimney that previously pierced the rear of the roof gable. Windows, although restored within recent years, are original.

#### Interior

The first floor of the Richter House is roughly quadripartite (see attached plan). When facing the main facade, the historic plan of each section reads, from left to right and front to back: dining room, pantry, kitchen, and ice box room; entry hall, stairs, den, and bathroom; living room; sun porch. Entry vestibules are situated off the second section at the front and rear. The second story is similarly divided, but is smaller because the first floor sunporch rises only one story. It reads: bedroom and maid's room; sewing room, stair hall, bathroom; two bedrooms. Historically, the attic was a single, open, unfinished space. The basement housed service areas: cellar, storage, and laundry; stairhall, vegetable cellar, and an unspecified room under the rear porch; another unspecified room, boiler room, and coal bin.

Much of the design integrity of the first level has been preserved. Some of the rooms feature floriated molding which runs along the edge of the ceiling. At several places this is punctuated by a rosette. Many of the doors incorporate leaded-glass lights, some more elaborate than others, and most in very good condition. A grand staircase in the entry hall, designed by the architects, sweeps dramatically to the second floor. Its turned balusters and elaborate newel are noteworthy. On a second-story partition wall above the stairs is a stained-glass window featuring a pastoral scene. A monumental brick fireplace dominates the northeast wall of the living room (see Photo 5). At the center of the mantel is a large keystone, carved, appropriately, of Montello Granite. Two irregularly-shaped art-glass windows flank the fireplace.

Few substantial alterations were implemented over the course of the Richter House's eighty-year history. The kitchen has been remodelled and modernized to meet current functional needs. A secondary staircase, leading from the front hall to the maid's quarters above, is no longer extant. This staircase now only serves to connect the second floor to the recently-finished attic bedroom suite above. Upstairs, bedroom closets and superfluous spaces have been converted into bathrooms for guests: the vegetable cellar in the basement has been similarly transformed. A hall near the stained-glass window on the second floor appears in the blueprints, while today a wall divides the space. As no previous resident or visitor remembers its existence--and no physical evidence suggests otherwise--it is probable that the wall was added during construction, as an afterthought.

The architects designed a house that would function smoothly, in a machine-like manner. This was achieved through extensive labor-saving, built-in devices, which are integrally incorporated within the structure. Wall outlets for a built-in vacuum-cleaning system, housed in the basement, were provided in many rooms on both floors. A clothes chute ran from the second-floor maid's room, through the kitchen, and into a laundry room located the basement. An "ice door" allowed the ice box located off the kitchen to be discreetly filled by a delivery person from the rear hall. For the pantry, according to original blueprints, an elaborate garbage disposal was designed. Perhaps most unique, though, is the outlet in the second-floor sewing room, which dispensed compressed air for Richter's daughter

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Blanche's airbrushes. Although not in the original plans, this feature was probably added shortly thereafter. Even built-in furniture--china cabinets in the dining room, book shelves in the living room--freed up floor space for other uses by compartmentalizing.

*Grounds 1909-33 C*

In back of the main house, a cluster of outbuildings stand amidst extensively-landscaped grounds, which contain a number of historic and modern design features. Original residents Charles Richter and William Scott--both avid gardeners--developed the lot over the years between 1909 and 1933: the current owners have continued the tradition. Historic and restored stone paths connect various of the buildings, and at certain places, decorative elements punctuate the design (see Photo 6). For example, in front of the guest house overlooking Montello Lake, an historic plaque of Montello Granite is set into the walk: it reads "Kickapoo," and depicts a moose. A below-grade paved path, reached by stone stairs, winds along the lakeshore from the guest house to near the northwest property boundary. A three-foot retaining wall defines this path, remarkable for its undulating top surfaced with small stones mounted in mortar. A second historic granite plaque, with the incised image of a fish, is situated at the foot of a stone fish-holding basin on the bank of the lake. A lantern-like object, crafted of concrete and stone and inscribed with the name "Scott"--Charles Richter's son-in-law--stands at the bottom of the stairs. Further down the path is a bench of highly polished Montello Granite. Both of these features are historic.

*Two-Car Garage c.1909 C Map No. 2*

A two-car garage of heavily-rusticated, unadorned granite blocks stands to the north behind the Richter House (see Photo 7). A cul-de-sac driveway fronts two garage doors--modern replacements--on the building's south side. Simple one-over-one, double-hung sash windows pierce the garage's walls, and an historic fixed-light and panelled set of carriage doors faces the yard to the rear (see Photo 8). These doors once opened on to a small drive, which connected to a private road that ran parallel to Montello Lake. A chimney rises out of the shingled, hipped roof, over what previously had been a chauffeur's quarters; the two-room apartment was accessed by a door on the west side. This garage is considered contributing because it is an intact, early example of a building type. It is unusual in that it was built to house not one, but two automobiles, in an era when automobiles were prohibitively expensive. Furthermore, several unique interior features set it apart: the chauffeur's quarters, and a recessed work-pit over which a car could be parked, which was used to access the undercarriage for repair.

*Scott Guest House (103 Underwood Avenue) 1920 C Map No. 3*

Built in 1920 for Richter's daughter Ethel Mae and son-in-law William Henry Scott, a stone-cutter at the Montello Granite Company quarry, the Scott House is a modest, one-story Colonial Revival side-gable (see Photo 9). It stands to the northwest of the main house, at roughly the center of the property. Irregular in plan, the building features a central entrance porch with a segmental pediment similar to that of the granite house, but less elaborate. A wing projecting from the southeast facade is not historic, but keeps in character with the rest of the building. Walls are painted clapboard with lighter trim. Two chimneys pierce the shingled roof. The interior has been modernized, although historic built-ins--small windows with sliding doors connecting the kitchen and dining room, for example--still remain. The Scott Guest House is considered contributing because it retains a high level of historic integrity.

*"Kickapoo" Guest House (105 Underwood Avenue) c.1925 C Map No. 4*

Built for the mentally-handicapped brother of William Scott, the main floor of this small building cantilevers out over Montello Lake, and houses a boat storage and launch underneath (see Photo 10). Three rooms constitute the living quarters of this rear-facing, L-shaped "bachelor's apartment." Its walls and cross-gabled roof are faced with wood shingles. A deteriorated fireplace on the west eave wall has recently been rebuilt, reusing most the original materials.

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The guest house's moniker, a reference to a Native American tribe that existed in the pre-European midwest, was probably meant to evoke rugged, outdoor living, as many contemporary bachelor's apartments and lodges did. The "Kickapoo" Guest House is considered contributing because it retains much of its integrity.

*Shed#1 c.1925 NC Map No. 5*

This side-gabled shed is slightly smaller than others on the grounds (see Photo 11). Its wood-shingled roof features decorative, "cake-icing" verge boards: an architectural theme appearing in many of the other outbuildings. Simple two-over-two light windows pierce its end facades, and shingles surround its panelled door. It is considered non-contributing due to its altered surface treatment.

*Shed#2 c.1920 NC Map No. 6*

This small, side-gabled storage shed retains more of its original integrity than the other outbuildings (see Photo 12). Nevertheless, its architectural fabric does not appear historic, and is therefore deemed non-contributing. Architectural similarities between this and the Scott Guest House--in addition to its location behind it--suggest that the two are chronologically related.

*Shed#3 c.1912 NC Map No. 7*

This small shed with an odd, half-gabled roof and overhang once served as an ice house (see Photo 13, foreground). The use of rusticated granite blocks, visible at the foundation and similar to those in the nearby two-car garage, suggests that this outbuilding was probably built contemporaneously. The roof of this one-story building is wood-shingled, and the facade under the each gable is clapboard. Because of its verge boards, the lattice-work affixed to the walls, and the attached modern arbor, it is considered non-contributing.

*Shed#4 c.1912 NC Map No. 8*

The same irregularity in roof shape visually links this shed to its immediate neighbor (see Photo 13, background). It also employs similarly-patterned verge boards and a wood-shingled roof. Clapboards cover its entire facade, however, and windows pierce its walls. It is non-contributing because its veneer is not historic.

*Deck 1994 NC Map No. 9*

This complex, wood deck incorporates benches, a fire pit, and a gabled gazebo (see Photo 14). It is non-contributing due to its age.

*One-Car Garage 1994 NC Map No. 10*

Although the design of this gabled garage is intended to blend with the historic buildings on the grounds, it is considered non-contributing because of its recent date of construction (see Photo 15).

8. Statement of Significance

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

\_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide X locally

Applicable National Register Criteria \_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B X C \_\_\_ D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance 1909-33 <sup>1</sup>	Significant Dates 1909-11 <sup>2</sup>
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Architecture		1920
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		c. 1925
--	--	---------

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person Architect/Builder

N/A Parkinson and Dockendorff, Architects

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

Statement of Significance

The Charles Samuel Richter House of Montello, Wisconsin, is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under **Criterion C**, in the area of **Architecture**. It is a locally-significant example of the Period Georgian Revival style which makes unique use of an indigenous construction material: Montello Granite.

Until only recently, the Richter House had been in the possession of individuals that were in some way affiliated with the Montello Granite Company, which operated a quarry at the corner of Main Street and Montello (then Nebraska) Street.<sup>3</sup> Built between 1909 and 1911, the house was commissioned by Charles Samuel Richter (1858-1935), an

X See continuation sheet

<sup>1</sup>Historic portions on the property were done between 1909 (the beginning of construction on the main house) and 1933 (completion of the landscaping).

<sup>2</sup>These dates coincide with the construction of various historic buildings on the property.

<sup>3</sup>See "Montello Granite and the Montello Granite Company" in this section for a detailed history of the company.



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executive in the company.<sup>4</sup> Richter had worked at the company's head office in Chicago before moving to Montello to oversee the quarry operations. He lived in the house with his wife, Mary Mae, and daughters Ethel and Blanche, until his death in 1935; his widow resided there until her own death, in 1941.<sup>5</sup>

There have been only three owners in the eighty-four years since the house was completed: members of the Richter family (1909 until the early 1950s); the Troost family (until 1990); and the current owner, Shirley J. Mast. It has also served its original function as a residence for the majority of its existence. Presently, the house is being renovated to serve as a corporate retreat. Because it had been allowed to deteriorate over time, with little done in the way of renovation, much of the house's historic fabric--especially externally--is intact. The current owners have been cognizant of this during their restoration efforts; as much of the building's integrity as possible has been retained, given the demands of its new function.

#### Historic Context

The *de facto* city of Montello is the product of two abutting yet distinct villages, both founded in the mid-nineteenth century. Montello, the earlier of the two, was located near the Fox River. It was the southernmost of the two villages. North Montello was, appropriately enough, located to the north of Montello, along the banks of the Montello River, and proximate to what was known as "the Hill": a striking outcropping of granite located immediately adjacent to the current downtown.

The community that was later to become Montello was established in June 1849, at the former site of a Winnebago settlement.<sup>6</sup> Jason Daniels was the first white person to live permanently in this area, although the immediate region had been frequented by others of European extraction, including Jesuit traders, the missionary and explorer Père Jacques Marquette (who passed through in 1673), and Canadian Louis Joliet. It was in honor of the former explorer that the county was named.

Physical improvements to the Fox-Wisconsin River in 1848 and 1849 brought others to the area that Jason Daniels had pioneered. In early 1849, Josiah H. Dartt took a land claim in the area; he holds the distinction of being one of the first to do so. By the fall of that year, a half-dozen settlers, including Catholic missionaries, had located in what was to become Montello. A public meeting was also held that year, for the purpose of deciding on a suitable name for the settlement. The establishment of a United States Post Office had been announced--a legitimizing addition to any fledgling town--and the settlement needed to be christened. Several names were proposed, including "Seralvo," Daniels' name for the place that he had founded. Josiah Dartt suggested "Montello," a name that he had encountered recently in a work of fiction. His proposal was ultimately adopted, and Montello was born.

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<sup>4</sup>Precisely what position Charles Richter held at the company is unclear. By some local accounts, he was president, but an undated pamphlet of around 1910, which delineates the company's "officers and directors," names Frank Troost as the president: a newspaper article of 1967 corroborates this (Montello Wisconsin: A Thriving and Up-to-Date City, no author given (Portage, WI: F. H. Voshardt, Publishers, c.1910), hereafter cited as *Thriving*; "Hardest 'Hill' in the World," *Portage Daily Register*, Saturday, November 25, 1967, page 2, hereafter cited as *Portage*). Richter's name appears in this pamphlet, but his title is not given.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with Charles Scott of Pacific Palisades, California, son of William Henry Scott and Ethel Mae Scott (née Richter), June 1994.

<sup>6</sup>*Wisconsin Archeologist*, Vol.5, Nos. 3 and 4, p.352.

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The first plat for Montello, constituting the area adjacent to the Fox River, was made in 1851 by local residents G. H. Barstow, E. B. Kelsey, and Henry S. Crandall. As it exists today, this area is south of the downtown, and constitutes part of Montello's residential district. The downtown section of Montello was platted in 1855 for E. B. Kelsey and George H. Dartt. This later plat was filed for record under the name "*North* Montello," in order to distinguish it from its neighbor.<sup>7</sup> Two additional plats were filed for record as parts of North Montello during 1856-1857, during what was considered an early building boom. The current City of Montello conjoined these two previously independent municipalities sometime around the turn-of-the-century.

Even though North Montello had developed as the governmental center of the area in the 1860s (it contained the courthouse and municipal building), it was only after the establishment of the quarry that the population began to migrate from the south to north. With this shift, a downtown centered around Main Street and West Montello Street (formerly Nebraska Street) emerged. The original southern plats became increasingly residential, as did the area immediately surrounding these two streets.

North Montello was originally referred to as "Hill River," because of its proximity to the Montello River and "the Hill"--really more of a rocky acclivity than a hill--which would eventually become home to the Montello Granite Company's principal quarry. These two geographical features became the source of the town's economic livelihood, and, at least in the case of the granite hill and quarry, an object of civic pride. Photographs chronicling Montello's early halcyon days are often careful to include, as backdrop, the river or hill.<sup>8</sup>

In 1890, the anonymous author of Portrait and Biographical Album of Green Lake, Marquette and Waushara Counties (hereafter cited as Portrait), lauding the zealous ambitions of the Montello populace, wrote that "Montello aspires to become a leading trade and manufacturing center...it ought easily to support and maintain a large city." Five years later it looked as though these aspirations may come true. By 1895, the population of Montello had grown from a spare handful to over 800 persons. This was due in part to the village's having become a "spur" of the Wisconsin Central Railroad, a grand trunk line which ran between Chicago and St. Paul, Minnesota, via Milwaukee. Such transportation allowed Montello access to nearby urban centers, and their material and human resources. The railroad was ideal for transporting the granite that was to become Montello's principal livelihood for almost a century. Concomitantly, it also encouraged the settlement of Montello by new immigrants and established Americans seeking refuge from burgeoning cities like New York and Chicago.<sup>9</sup>

These early Montello residents were understandably filled with optimism about their common future: "A feature in favor of the settler in this region has been the facility and cheapness of marketing...products, there being a railway and water transportation within a short distance of every well-settled city" (Portrait). Montello was one such "well-settled" town.

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<sup>7</sup>Before deciding on "North Montello," locals had even considered "Darttsville" for the name of their town. Needless to say, this particular appellation was suggested by one of the members of the Dartt family.

<sup>8</sup>For examples, see images in the photographic collection of the Marquette County Historical Society.

<sup>9</sup>Biographical sketches of Montello residents in Portrait indicate that many of the American-born settlers in the area were of Yankee origin; the largest single group being first- or second-generation New Yorkers. This is understandable given that New York was at that time the most populous state, and New York City the largest city. There were, additionally, many Welsh settlers in the northeast part of the Montello Township, and a significant number of Vermont natives to the south.

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It could, and did, import goods, which were sold, in stores downtown, to nearby farmers and homesteaders.<sup>10</sup> The commercial district of Montello flourished. In the early half of this century, Main and West Montello Streets were home to an agricultural implements store (and storage), two banks, a barber, a baker, three butchers, a clothing store, a doctor's office, two drugstores, three dry goods stores, two furniture stores, four general stores, four groceries, three hardware stores, two harness stores, three hotels, a jeweller, two lodges for fraternal organizations, two milliners, a newspaper printing office, a notions store, a post office, two restaurants, a tailor, three tinshops, and a multitude of saloons. The Richter House, standing on what was locally known as "Courthouse Hill," overlooked the activity of this commercial zone, and stood as a symbol of the industry so integral to the town's livelihood: granite quarrying.

Montello Granite and the Montello Granite Company

Once described as "unsightly," the pile of granite known to locals as "the Hill" eventually proved to be one of Montello's biggest commercial boons. The processed forms of this "elliptical shaped, rounded mound of pink granite, one-third mile in length, forty feet high, medium grain, close texture..." (Portrait) would go on to win a competition at Chicago's Columbian Exposition of 1893 for being the hardest granite of all those judged, would be chosen for use in the sarcophagi at Grant's Tomb in New York City, and would be incorporated alongside some of the best stone from around the world in the State Capitol of Wisconsin.<sup>11</sup> An average of 186,000 pounds of pressure was required to crack a three inch cube of Montello granite.<sup>12</sup>

The history of the granite company begins, of all places, in Chicago. In 1879, Chicago businessman Claude B. King, visiting a relative in Montello, realized the potential for profit inherent in that "mound of pink granite" which the people of Montello had not, despite thirty years of settlement in the area, considered worth quarrying. King was somewhat familiar with the quarrying industry, and had acquaintances who were involved in it professionally. One was fellow Chicagoan and granite-dealer J. H. Anderson, to whom he mentioned his idea. Six months later, the Chicago-based Montello Granite Company was formed. The headquarters office was at 162 Washington Street.

The early years on the company were tumultuous, if corporate nomenclature is any indication of corporate life. In 1883, following the death of King, the company's name was changed to the Wisconsin Granite Company. That same year, surviving partner Anderson, with new partners E. S. Pike and one "Mr. McGinnis," purchased a smaller, less productive quarry in Berlin, Wisconsin. The following year the company name was changed again, this time to reflect the expanding operations: the Berlin and Montello Granite Company. Later it reverted back to the Montello Granite Company.

Quarrying was an expensive endeavor. The cost of developing the Montello site into a functioning quarry came to \$22,500. Some of this was probably spent on the small, functionally specific working facilities in which the various stages of granite processing occurred. Early maps indicate the existence of a multitude of buildings on the site, including a polishing works, a crusher, a blacksmith shop (which continued to stand as late as 1962), several buildings for stone

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<sup>10</sup>See, for example, 28 West Montello Street, wherein "agricultural implements" were once marketed.

<sup>11</sup>Additionally, Montello granite can be seen in Civil War monuments at Chickamauga, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg; soldiers' monuments of Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa at Andersonville; and the United States Government's monument to General Custer in the Black Hills of Montana. The opulent Potter Palmer Mansion in Chicago, no longer extant, also utilized the durable construction material. As of 1910, the company was at work on a Civil War statuary group that included Generals Grant and Lee.

<sup>12</sup> *Portage*.

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cutting, granite bins, derricks, and others.<sup>13</sup> None of these ephemeral structures--many of which were little more than sheds--remain to this day, except as images in occasional old photographs.

Although permanent structures at the quarry were usually not practical, a few did exist. The two which survive to this day were not used in the everyday, hands-on quarrying activities at the site; it is for this reason that they were built to last. One is the granite company's administrative offices, which were constructed to the north, away from the quarry, in 1919. The other is the power plant alongside the Montello River flume which provided energy for the entire complex.

Besides monuments, Montello granite was used for other, more mundane purposes. Imperfect stone was hand-cut into blocks that were used for street-paving in Chicago, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. Crushed granite reinforced the cement light posts of Wisconsin's largest city. Waste stone--that which was broken during the extraction process--was used to line railway beds and macadamize roads. This finished granite, in whatever form, was shipped out of Montello via the Fox River waterway in the early years, by rail from 1882 until 1952, and finally by truck.

With eighty to one hundred men constantly employed on a daily basis during the early years of operation, the company's annual revenues amounted to between \$85,000 and \$100,000--a considerable sum given the relatively small size of the quarry. Business thrived because of the properties of the product itself, which was so durable that temperature and extreme environmental conditions--in particular frost--affected it little, so quarrying could continue year around. Conversely, quarries with less resilient lodes were forced to cease operations during the cold-weather months, as most weaker stone tended to crack under inclement conditions.

Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello reveal the gradual enlargement of the quarry over time. The 1894 map indicates the nonspecific presence of a small "Quarry," while the 1901 map shows the same quarry at "30' Deep." Eight years later the depth is 80', while by 1919 it is simply a "Deep Quarry Hole." In the seventies when the company closed, the quarry occupied approximately four acres of downtown Montello.

The peak years for employment at the granite company was around 1909, with two hundred men working daily at the downtown quarry. Not accidentally, this period of prosperity coincides with the construction of the mansion-like Richter House. Richter and Frank Troost--father of Clarence Troost, Sr., who would later inhabit the residence--held management-level positions at the company. Everyday life in Montello then was a bustling mixture of retail and labor-related activities. But over time, the number of employees decreased. By the 1960s, when Clarence Troost, Jr. and his son Bryan ran the company, it employed only twenty to twenty-five men, annually. This small crew worked in a large steel building constructed with local funds after a fire destroyed much of the company's original property and machinery in 1951. By 1975, only twelve people were hired at the quarry each year. The Montello Granite Company finally discontinued operations in 1976, after ninety-five years of existence.

Today the quarry is used as encapsulated scenery; as a park which can be experienced at a distance. Water fills the hole wherein workers extracted, chiseled, and polished, and waterfalls flow over what is now left of "the Hill." Granite had been Montello's chief industry and source of income. Despite its loss of this resource, the city has not been relegated to a dying small town status, as so many other rural municipalities have. Montello is still the "natural summer resort" it was touted as earlier in the century.<sup>14</sup> The tourism and sporting industries still exist near Montello, as lakes such as Buffalo, Montello, and White continue to attract vacationers. Furthermore, government, the most recession-proof of industries, draws Marquette County residents to the area.

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<sup>13</sup>Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello from 1894, 1901, 1909, 1927. See also *Portage*.

<sup>14</sup>*Thriving*.

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Montello Granite has not been quarried in twenty years. But the city that the granite built--in particular the downtown near where it was coaxed from the ground--still exists, in a state not unlike that of the original.

Architecture

The Richter House was designed around 1909 by the architectural firm of Parkinson and Dockendorff, La Crosse.<sup>15</sup> According to Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Volume 2 (hereafter cited as CRM), Albert E. Parkinson (1870-1952) and Thomas P. Dockendorff (1878-1952) are considered among the "foremost architects who practiced in the state." Credited with over eight-hundred designs, they are best known for their public buildings, many of which are schools.<sup>16</sup> The Richter House represents a departure from their usual commissions.

Albert Parkinson was born in London in 1870. Early in his childhood he emigrated to Wisconsin, and began practicing architecture between 1897 and 1900. Six years later he and Thomas Dockendorff established the firm of Parkinson and Dockendorff.

More is known about Thomas Dockendorff's life. Born in LaCrosse to German-immigrant parents in 1878, Dockendorff was educated at the Polytechnic Institute in Darmstadt, Germany. After two years of formal architectural training, he studied for nearly five more years in Mainz under professor Ludwig Becker. He then returned to Wisconsin to begin practice. Dockendorff's first job was in the local architectural office of Stoltze and Schick, La Crosse, where he worked for two years.

The building Parkinson and Dockendorff designed for Charles Richter is Period Georgian Revival. Characteristic elements of that style, as listed in the CRM, recur over the house's exterior: a formal, symmetrical facade and rectangular plan; sidelights flanking doorways; Palladian windows; and classical columns. Although this style is fairly common--it was popular in Wisconsin from roughly 1900 until 1940--the manner of execution here is unique. The granite-faced walls are visually arresting, so much so that the building is known simply as "the Granite House." According to local citizens, this granite took several years to accumulate. The building's rough-hewn surfaces give it a rough, geomorphic appearance, as if the walls were naturally-occurring. The surface plasticity achieved through the irregular, rounded stones is more typical of the ponderous Richardsonian Romanesque than the formal, measured Georgian Revival style. This juxtaposition of subtle, Georgian details and dense wall treatments makes for a distinctive and memorable design.

The architecturally-significant Richter House is made even more unique by its highly-personalized surroundings. Extant is a landscape design that represents the creative efforts of an extended family, who, over the course of roughly twenty years, transformed a little-developed lot near the center of the town into a picturesque retreat. They lived in the larger buildings on the property--the main house, the guest houses--and when not occupied with business at the Montello Granite Company, developed their land. The ensemble they created is remarkably intact, despite alterations to several of the less-important outbuildings.

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<sup>15</sup>Original blueprints, in the possession of the current owners, indicate this.

<sup>16</sup>Paul F. Neverman, Twenty-Five Years of School House Planning, 1902-1927 (LaCrosse, WI: Parkinson and Dockendorff, Architects, 1927), i. The Montello High School is one of their many educational designs.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet

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 #

Primary location of additional data:

- X   State Historic Preservation Office
- X   Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- X   Other

Specify repository: State Historical Society Library and Archives; Shirley J. Mast

10 Geographical Data

Acreage of property 2.4 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>16</u>	<u>3/1/2/5/2/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/3/6/0</u>	B	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	D	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

       See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

X See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

X See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

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Approved 2/87

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The boundary of the Richter, Charles Samuel, House (Block 4, Lot 1 of the Plat of West Montello) is shown as the solid line on the accompanying site map.

**VERBAL JUSTIFICATION OF BOUNDARY**

The nominated property encompasses the entire parcel historically associated with the Richter, Charles Samuel, House. This includes, in addition to the main residence, eight outbuildings and one structure. Because the surrounding grounds historically have been landscaped, the land itself is included as landscape/garden feature.

Visually, the Richter House property is bounded by Montello Lake to the north; the Marquette County Courthouse to the east; the original, platted Underwood Avenue (roughly parallel to the existing State Trunk Highway 23) to the south; and a City of Montello cemetery to the west.

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**PHOTOS**

*Photo 1 of 15.*

(Map No. 1).

Richter, Charles Samuel, House: Main facade, distant view.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking east.

*Photo 2 of 15.*

(Map No. 1).

Richter, Charles Samuel, House: Main facade.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking northeast.

*Photo 3 of 15.*

(Map No. 1).

Richter, Charles Samuel, House: Main facade, detail of porch.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking north.

*Photo 4 of 15.*

(Map No. 1).

Richter, Charles Samuel, House: Southeast end.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View Looking **NW**

*Photo 5 of 15.*

(Map No. 1).

Richter, Charles Samuel, House: Interior detail of fireplace.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking northeast.

*Photo 6 of 15.*

Richter, Charles Samuel, House: Landscape detail.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking north.

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*Photo 7 of 15.*

(Map No. 2).

Richter, Charles Samuel, House: Two-car garage, south facade.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking north.

*Photo 8 of 15.*

(Map No. 2).

Richter, Charles Samuel, House: Two-car garage, north facade.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking southeast.

*Photo 9 of 15.*

(Map No. 3).

Scott Guest House.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking northeast.

*Photo 10 of 15.*

(Map No. 4).

"Kickapoo" Guest House.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking northeast.

*Photo 11 of 15.*

(Map No. 5).

Shed #1.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking northeast.

*Photo 12 of 15.*

(Map No. 6).

Shed #2.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking northeast.

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*Photo 13 of 15.*  
(Map Nos. 7 & 8).  
Sheds #3 & #4.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking northwest.

*Photo 14 of 15.*  
(Map No. 9).  
Richter, Charles Samuel, House: Deck.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking northwest.

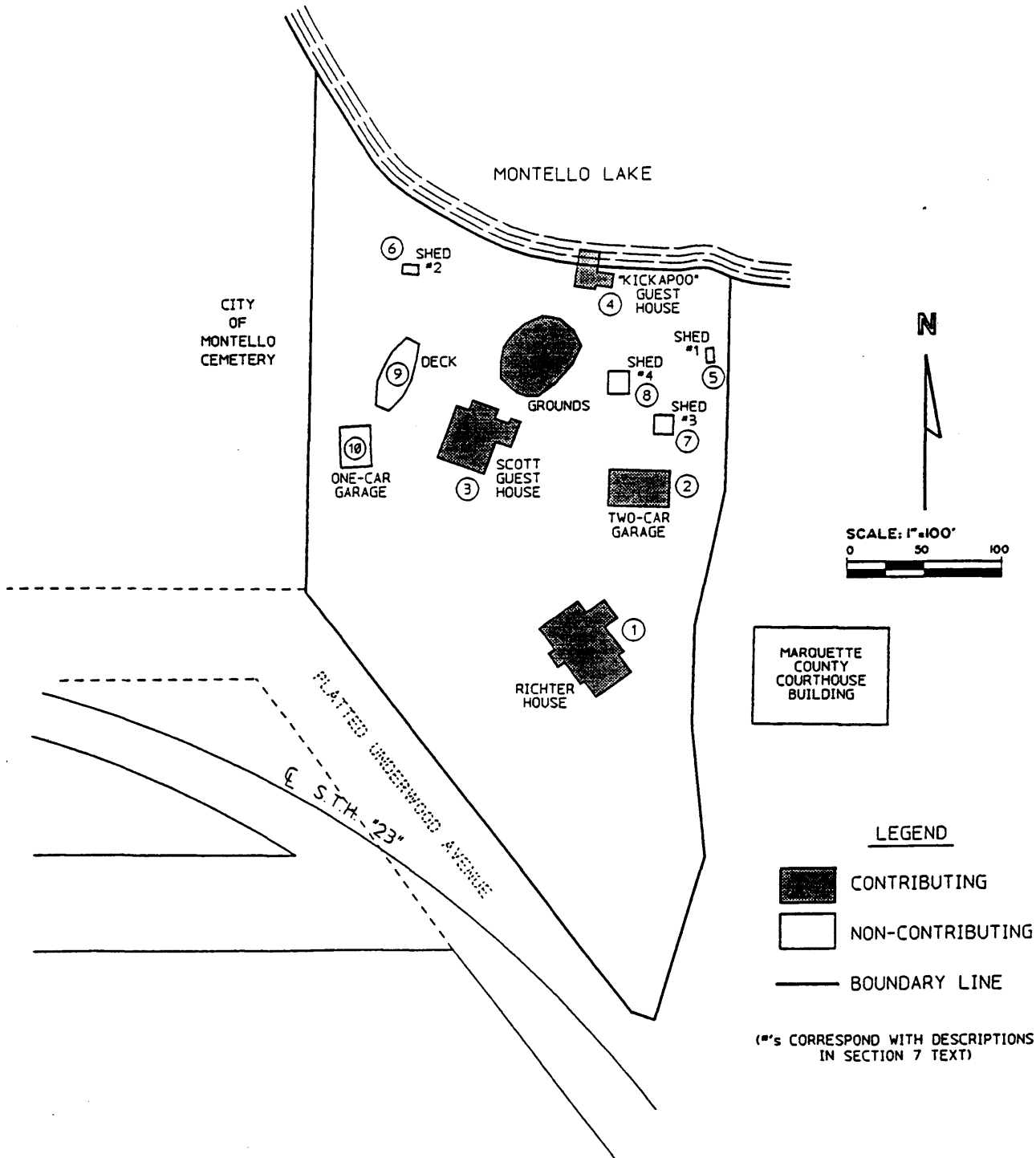
*Photo 15 of 15.*  
(Map No. 10).  
One-car garage.  
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.  
Photo by T. Nordbrock, December 20, 1994.  
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.  
View looking southwest.

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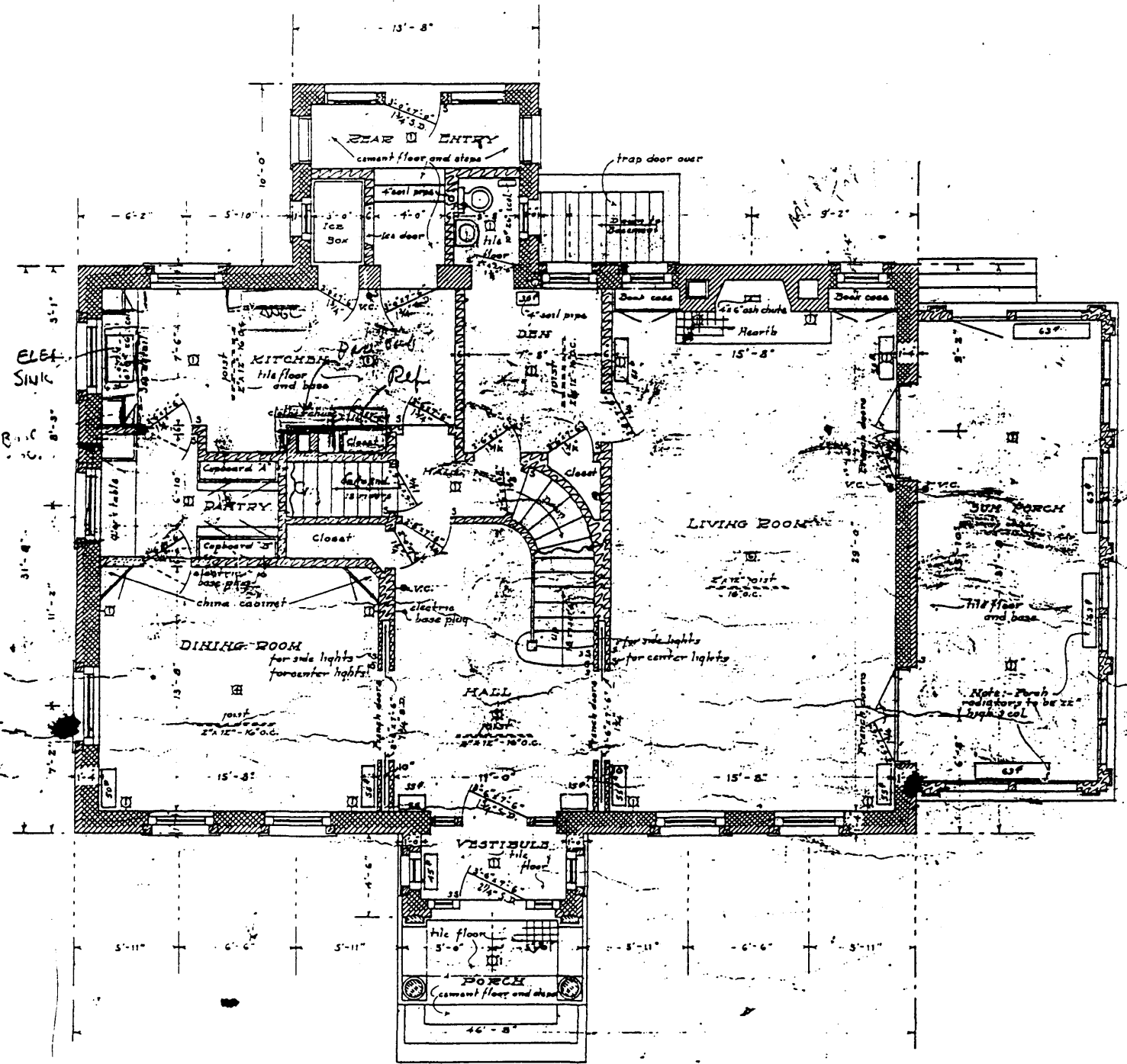


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FIRST FLOOR PLAN