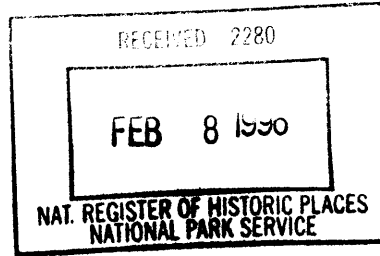


NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 8/86)
Wisconsin Word Processor Format (1331D)
(Approved 3/87)

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	Montello Commercial Historic District
other names/site number	N/A

2. Location

street & number	Various-See Property Inventory in Section 7.	N/A	not for publication
city, town	Montello	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Marquette	code 077
			zip code 53949

3. Classification

Ownership of Property		Category of Property		No. of Resources within Property:	
				contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private		building(s)		
	public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district	22	12 buildings
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public-State		site	1	sites
	public-Federal		structure		1 structures
			object		objects
				23	13 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.

Jeffrey M. Dean
Signature of certifying official
State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

1/29/96
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

Division of Historic Preservation
State Historical Society
816 State Street
Madison, WI 53703
(608) 264-6500

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):

Edson H. Beall

3/7/98

Signature of the Keeper

Date

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/department store
- COMMERCE/financial institution
- COMMERCE/restaurant
- COMMERCE/specialty store
- INDUSTRY/extractive facility

- COMMERCE/professional
- COMMERCE/restaurant
- COMMERCE/specialty store
- RECREATION/outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification (enter categories from instructions)	Materials (enter categories from instructions)	
Italianate	foundation	Granite
Queen Anne	walls	Brick
Colonial Revival	roof	Asphalt
Late 19 th and Early 20 th Century American Movements	other	Wood

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Description

The Montello Downtown Historic District encompasses the commercial portions of Main and West Montello Streets in the small city of Montello in Marquette County [SEE PHOTOS 1-6]. The area in question is Montello's central business district, and includes 34 buildings (including outbuildings), a bridge, and an abandoned quarry. This quarry, previously operated by the Montello Granite Company of Chicago, Illinois, is the most striking physical feature of the town [SEE PHOTO 7]. Montello is also the seat of county government, a presence represented by the 1916 Marquette County Courthouse (NRHP 3-9-82), which overlooks the downtown from its conspicuous location on a nearby hill. The Montello River runs roughly parallel to Main Street, and intersects West Montello Street, where the aforementioned bridge is located.

The 22 contributing buildings and one site in this roughly two-block district were built between 1886 and 1945. Almost without exception, they are two-story structures constructed of brick, with prominent first-story display windows. Like the commercial buildings of many other small towns, those in Montello have been altered primarily at the first-story level, reflecting change in retail function over time. Second stories, however, remain largely intact. The old quarry, although filled with water, is nevertheless historically important to the development of the town, and is thus considered a contributing site. In addition to these contributing properties, there are twelve buildings and one structure that are non-contributing, so determined because of their lack of integrity or requisite age [SEE PHOTO 9]. Six of this number are outbuildings. The West Montello Street bridge over the Montello River is deemed a non-contributing structure.

Because of their close physical proximity with the Montello Granite Company, the properties considered herein were irrevocably bound up with that enterprise. They were also economically linked; many of the downtown lots were owned, at different times, by representatives of the Chicago-based company. Furthermore, quarry employees (over two hundred strong in the company's heyday¹) were a salient population of consumers in Montello's small downtown. Stores were geared towards this proletariat and their needs.

X See continuation sheet

¹ Fran Sprain, Places and Faces in Marquette County, Wisconsin (Westfield, Wisconsin: Isabella Press, 1991) p. 17.

8. Statement of Significance

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

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

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

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)	Period of Significance	Significant Dates ³⁰
	1879	1879

Commerce	1879-1945	
----------	-----------	--

Architecture	1886-1945	
--------------	-----------	--

	Cultural Affiliation	
--	----------------------	--

	N/A	
--	-----	--

Significant Person	Architect/Builder	
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N/A	Unknown	
-----	---------	--

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

Statement of Significance

Introduction

Under National Register **Criterion A**, Montello's downtown is locally significant for **Commerce**. The commercial growth of Montello—most importantly, why and where it grew—is inescapably linked to the Montello Granite Company, the consumerism that it encouraged, and the downtown that it helped develop. The Montello Granite Company employed approximately 200 Montello residents during its most prosperous years of operation.³¹ Out of context, this may not seem a significant number. But given that Montello has had a population of less than 1,000 for the majority of its existence, one can appreciate the impact that the 200 granite workers had on the town.

See continuation sheet

³⁰ 1879 (granite quarry opens); 1886 (construction of 39 West Montello Street); 1895 (construction of 44-50 West Montello Street); 1899 (construction of 1 and 5 Main Street).

³¹ "Hardest 'Hill' in the World," Portage Daily Register, Saturday, November 25, 1967, page 2. Hereafter cited as *Portage*.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

Primary location of additional data:

 previously listed in the National Register

X State Historic Preservation Office

 previously determined eligible by the National Register

X Other State agency

 designated a National Historic Landmark

 Federal agency

 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

 Local government

 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

 University

 Other

Specify repository: State Historical Society

Library and Archives

10 Geographical Data

Acreage of property 9 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/6/2/5</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/2/2/0</u>	B	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/7/3/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/2/3/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/7/0/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/3/2/0</u>	D	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/7/6/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/3/4/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

X See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

X See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

X See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title	<u>Amy A. Ross and T. Ernst Nordbrock, Architectural Historians</u>		
organization	<u>Mead & Hunt, Inc.</u>	date	<u>November 30, 1994</u>
street & number	<u>6501 Watts Road, Suite 101</u>	telephone	<u>(608) 273-6380</u>
city or town	<u>Madison</u>	state	<u>Wisconsin</u> zip code <u>53719</u>

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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Montello Commercial Historic District
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin

East Montello Street runs along the abandoned four acre quarry--known locally as "the Hill," where buildings line only the south side of the street. Most of these are free-standing and residential, not commercial. This portion of the downtown is omitted from the district because the building density and type are different from that of Main and West Montello streets. The boundary begins at the nexus of Main and West Montello streets, which is the principal intersection of town. From here the district extends south on Main Street until buildings with no distinguished integrity are reached. Nine buildings (including outbuildings) are located on Main Street. The boundary is similarly drawn on West Montello Street. Twenty-six properties (including the quarry and outbuildings) are located here. A lone building is situated on the far side of the quarry on East Park Street. This effectively incorporates the majority of the commercial buildings in downtown Montello. Free-standing houses that ring the district offer visual and functional contrast to the discrete historic environment of the downtown.

Styles whose influences are prominently represented in this district include Italianate [SEE PHOTO 10], Queen Anne [SEE PHOTO 11], and Vernacular Commercial [SEE PHOTO 12]. To a lesser degree, Boom Town buildings and eclectic design buildings (drawing motifs in this case from both the Italianate and Queen Anne) are seen. A single example of the Georgian Revival style can also be found. Astylistic outbuildings, one "structure" (a bridge), one "site" (the quarry), and one recent building are considered under the blanket label "Other."

Following are descriptions of buildings within the proposed district. Whenever possible, original owner, building name, and date of construction have been included.²

C=Contributing, NC=Non-Contributing.

Boom Town

West Montello Street

[Map #25] 13 West Montello Street--Grocery c.1893 NC
[Map #24] 15 and 17 West Montello Street--Millinery c.1893 NC

These three contiguous Boom Town-style stores are located on the north side of West Montello Street, adjacent to the Montello River. Their large street-facing parapets are indicative of the style. As is so common in older commercial structures, the first stories of these buildings have been altered substantially, reflecting changes in retail function over time. Plate-glass windows, aluminum siding, and obtrusive signage have compromised their architectural integrity. Furthermore, the parapet walls are specious: they do not date from the period commonly associated with Boom Town architecture. They are intentionally quaint and archaic.

²Determining original ownership has proven especially difficult, because tax assessment rolls for the Village of Montello, held in bound volumes at the Oshkosh Area Research Center, exist only in ten-year increments, from 1900 until 1940. Since most of the buildings in the proposed district were built in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, these rolls are of little use in determining original ownership. However, Sanborn-Perris and Foote maps and various historical sources have proved invaluable in determining many of the construction dates and ownership information included herein (see bibliography for citation of these sources).

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Montello Commercial Historic District
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin

13 West Montello Street is currently occupied by Shirley's Old Time Barbershop, but has housed, at earlier times, a grocery, a confectionery, and other barbershops.³ 15 and 17 West Montello Street, although separate structural entities, have been grafted together internally and now form a single restaurant, Mary's Coffee Cup Cafe. Both of these buildings have served a wide variety of previous functions.⁴

Italianate and Italianate Style-Influenced

Main Street

[Map #1] 14-20 Main Street--Commercial Block c.1893, c.1901-1909 C

This two-story Italianate style-influenced commercial vernacular block has a uniform facade that has historically contained four individual stores, and it is still divided in this manner. The northern three stores were built at the same time, and appear on the 1894 Sanborn-Perris map of Montello as a frame structure with a metal cornice. By 1901, the exterior walls were cream-colored brick. The fourth store in this block was added to the south end between 1901 and 1909.⁵

Several architectural details on the second story contribute to the Italianate character of this building. There are a total of nine windows across the upper floor; each opening has a stone sill, and a crowning brick segmental arch. Above eight of the windows is a decorative brick panel executed in a dogtooth pattern. Treatment of the facade at cornice level includes corbelled brackets and a row of dogtooth detailing. Original lights remain only in the one-over-one, double-hung wood sashes of 20 Main Street. The other seven windows are modern, and the four above 14 and 16 Main Street are partially filled in with concrete block.

There are two semi-circular commemorative panels at the level of the squares of dogtooth patterning. One, located above the wall dividing 14 and 16 Main Street, reads "C. Manthey 1893;" the other, situated above the entrance to 18 Main Street, reads "M. Hennig 1893." These two stone panels serve to date this portion of this block of stores.

The ground floor of the facade at 20 Main Street has surviving cast-iron architectural features. One of the pilasters flanking the entrance is stamped "Portage Ironworks 1904." Similar posts can be seen at 28 and 32 West Montello Street addresses. This shop also has a metal entablature at the top of the first story, as does the neighboring store at

³Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello, 1894, 1901, and 1909. Shirley Drinkwater, the current proprietress, has been at this location for two years. Immediately preceding her was Matt's Barbershop (Matt Brown, proprietor), which was in existence for approximately four years. Matt's replaced yet another barbershop, operated by Ed and Tom Ritchie, which had, in turn, succeeded the Daniel brothers' barbershop (interview with Shirley Drinkwater, June 20, 1994).

⁴According to Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello, between the years of 1894 and 1927, 15 West Montello Street served as a millinery, a saloon, and an unspecified "shop." 17 West Montello Street housed a harness store and "shop." The labelling of properties by function becomes less specific with the 1927 map, as evidenced by the unusual number of vague "shop"s that appear that year. For example, the majority of the businesses in this district are labelled by specific function (e.g. "tinware," "barber," "dry goods") on the map of 1909, but are designated as mere "shop"s in 1927.

⁵Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello, 1901 and 1909.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 3 Montello Commercial Historic District
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin

18 Main Street. 18 Main Street has the most interesting surviving fragment of a cast-iron storefront in town: three pilasters topped by small Indian heads in the place of capitals.

None of the doors or windows on the first floor of this block are original, and several seem to not be in their original location. The first stories of 14 and 16 Main Street have both been covered with a combination of stone veneer and vinyl siding.

There is a modern addition, which is part concrete block and part wood siding, at the back of this block on the north end.

The function of each store changed many times in the early years. A meat shop, millinery and saloon were located here in 1894 and 1901. Then in 1909, a saloon, restaurant, grocery and clothing store occupied the block that by this time included four separate retail spaces.

[Map #4] 15 Main Street-Saloon c.1900 C

A single brick Italianate style-influenced commercial vernacular building housing two stores (one a saloon, the other unspecified) built for Julius Winchell was first indicated on this lot on the 1901 Sanborn-Perris map of Montello. Today it is a single store. Originally, this one-story building was considered non-contributing. With the recent removal of its integrity-compromising modern facade (which revealed the historic facade underneath), the building has been reappraised, and is now judged to be contributing to the district.⁶

The upper one-third of the main facade, including a dogtooth-panelled and banded cornice, is executed in cream brick. The lower two-thirds, which includes two modern plate-glass windows and an off-center, recessed entrance flanked by original windows, is predominately of contrasting red brick. This latter brickwork is a more recent addition. A metal lintel runs the length of the facade.

This building served as a saloon from 1900 until sometime between 1909 and 1927, after which it was converted into a printing, or newspaper, office.⁷

[Map #3] 17 and 19 Main Street-Fountain House 1899 C

In 1899, the present two-story, white-painted brick building at 17 and 19 Main Street was built by hotel proprietor Patrick Croarken. By 1909, the hotel's name had been changed from the Fountain House to the Tremont Hotel, and the business was run by Otto Knopf.

The Fountain House exemplifies the Italianate style-influenced commercial vernacular design. However, the original wood porch and cornice features that have been removed may have given it a more Victorian appearance. The second story of the Main Street facade retains some of its historic character. Five openings extend across this upper portion of the

⁶As of July 1994, building owners Pat Glaab and Chris Todd were in the process of renovating the interior and the rear of this building, which abuts the Montello River. This couple was responsible for the removal of the modern wood panelling that had covered part of the facade and lent to our original "non-contributing" verdict.

⁷Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello, 1901, 1909, and 1927. Also, interview with Robert William Zellmer, June 20, 1994. The Foote map of 1900 lists "Mrs. Winchell" as the owner of this property.

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Montello Commercial Historic District
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facade, including four windows with flat arches above that flank a central door. There are dogtooth panels above each of the windows, and above the door is a granite panel with the inscription "P. Croarken 1899." There is no cornice.

The front and south facades of this free-standing building have been painted white. This bright, heavily-applied paint obscures much of the detail in the brickwork. The north side reveals the true color of the brick—a brown identical to that material used for the commercial block at 1 and 5 Main Street.

The lower story has been completely altered. Much of the double storefront is now enclosed with wood, and all of the windows and doors are modern. A newer porch runs the length of the building. This porch has a decorative concrete block floor, modern wrought-iron piers supporting its wood roof, and a recent wrought-iron railing along the roofline, which creates a balcony for the second story. A fire escape leads off the south end of the balcony. The foundation of the structure is Montello granite.

[Map #2] 22 Main Street—Furniture Shop, Masonic Lodge 1905⁸ C

This two-story Italianate style-influenced commercial vernacular building was constructed of rock-faced concrete block in 1905. The embedded stone panel on the second story which reads "Masonic Hall F. & A. M. No. 141" confirms that this structure was originally built to include a meeting room for the Masons.⁹ This building is first indicated on the 1909 Sanborn Map, and is identified as a furniture shop. On the 1927 Sanborn Map, it is labelled as containing lodge rooms.

The Masonic Lodge's distinguishing architectural features are found on the second story, and include segmental arch window hoods and a projecting cornice. Alterations to this story consist of the enclosure of the two large windows with wood panels. The back of the building has identical windows.

The first story has been significantly altered, though two cast-iron pilasters remain of the original storefront. In addition to the door in the middle, there is also a door at the south end of the front of the building that leads up to the lodge rooms on the second floor. The first story has modern doors and windows, and the concrete block has been painted red. A bracketed iron cornice remains across the top of the first story, but is partially obscured by a sign.

The exterior side walls step back toward the rear of the building with four distinct wall heights. There is a small addition at the rear of the original structure.

⁸Advertisement, Montello Express, November 10, 1905. The grand opening of the new Masonic hall is advertised.

⁹See 39 West Montello Street, which housed a similar fraternal organization: the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

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Section number 7 Page 5 Montello Commercial Historic District
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West Montello Street

[Map #10] 28 West Montello Street--Agricultural Implements c.1905 C

Inscribed posts from the Portage Iron Works similar to those at 20 Main Street and 32 West Montello Street indicate that this two-story Italianate style-influenced commercial vernacular building was constructed c.1905.¹⁰ The off-set, recessed entrance to this store allows for display windows that, although contemporary, probably are similar to the original ones. Several lozenge-shaped decorations appear below these windows. Two cornices—one above the first floor, one crowning the building—are possibly both original, despite their minimal, "stripped-down" appearance. The second-story windows have stone sills and relieving arches. The windows themselves are recent replacements. The building's facade is white-painted brick.

Perhaps most noteworthy about this building is its interior, which is remarkably intact. Subdivision of the internal spaces to meet different retail needs over time does not seem to have occurred here: the store is still a single, open room. Its wooden floors and ceiling also appear to be original, but the store's most salient feature, a strikingly long display counter, although antique, originated at a store in Illinois and was only recently moved here.¹¹

[Map #11] 32 West Montello Street--Grocery c.1889 C

The decorated cast-iron posts that flank the recessed central entrance to this commercial Italianate building read "Portage Iron Works 1889," thus enabling the two-story structure to be dated to around that time.¹² Vertical slats of wood have been used to fill in first-floor spaces on the facade that were probably once display windows for the grocery that occupied the building from approximately 1894 until 1909, and the hardware/tinshop that succeeded it. The second story has a pair of windows with intact stone sills and ornamental brick hood molds, but the fenestration itself is not original. A bracketed cornice with incised semi-circular designs crowns the facade. Brick, painted an off-white color, is the building material here.

[Map #17] 39 West Montello Street--Furniture Shop, I.O.O.F. Lodge 1886 C

This two-story building has the most elaborate cornice in the Montello downtown. Typically Italianate style scrolled brackets support the cornice and a centrally located triangular pediment. Incised floral patterns decorate the panels between these brackets, and a string-course of dentils is situated above. The four two-over-two light windows in the

¹⁰Sanborn-Perris and Foote maps of Montello indicate the presence of a grocery at this site in 1894. In 1900 and 1901 no structure exists whatsoever. In 1909, presumably after a new building was constructed, an "Ag[ricultural] Implements" business is shown; in 1927, an "Implements Storage." Since 1977, Ronald and Corinne Heilmeier have owned and operated the current store. According to locals, the building formerly housed a dry-cleaner (interviews of June 20, 1994).

¹¹Interview with anonymous store-worker, June 20, 1994.

¹²The building also appears in Sanborn-Perris maps from 1894 on, indicating its early presence in the downtown. See 20 Main Street and 28 West Montello Street for other examples of cast-iron posts from the Portage Iron Works foundry.

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Montello Commercial Historic District
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second story are probably original. Distinct "shadows" over these windows testify to the former presence of now-removed brackets. Lower down on the light blue-painted brick facade, a granite plaque reads "I.O.O.F. No. 232 1886" (indicating that the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, Lodge 232, were involved in the building of this 1886 structure). Like the Montello chapter of the Free Masons (located at 22 Main Street), this fraternal order probably occupied only the second-floor. In any event, they no longer do. This floor now contains a two-bedroom apartment.¹³ An overhang with applied cedar shake is a later addition to the first-story, as is another plaque, which reads "Jimmy's 1948." Between roughly 1894 and 1901, 39 West Montello Street housed a furniture store owned by the Montello Building Association. Later it became a tinware store and then a "shop" of unspecified retail function.¹⁴

[Map #13] 44-50 West Montello Street-Commercial Block c.1895 C

This quadripartite Italianate style-influenced commercial vernacular block [SEE PHOTO 10] was actually built as two distinct buildings: one, with three individual storefronts (the eastern three-quarters of the block), and a second, comprising the remaining one-quarter of the block. A vertical "seam" is evidence that the two buildings were built at different times, and have settled at different rates.¹⁵ A denticulated cornice and stringcourses run the entire length of the block's facade, and the window hood molds are all identical (even though the window configurations are not). The eastern-most one-quarter of the block has been painted a different color (beige vis-à-vis pastel blue), which serves to visually isolate it. Decoration on the building is sparse, and limited to the cornice area (dentils and dogtooth course bricks) and windows with hood molds. Three sets of three windows (including a pair of triangular windows in the smaller building) perforate the second story. The four entrances to the four individual stores are off-set, and flanked on one side by display windows.

Billy K.'s Saloon is located at 44 West Montello Street, while the Montello Professional Building comprises 46-50 West Montello Street. 50 West Montello Street, currently Central Wisconsin Title, was a saloon from 1894 until after 1909. By 1927, it was an unspecified shop. The now-vacant 48 West Montello Street housed Norwest Mortgage, Inc., which recently relocated to another building in Montello. The earlier history of this store is unknown. 46 West Montello Street, presently the law offices of Gregory R. Wright, was a butcher shop between 1894 and 1909, before likewise becoming an unspecified shop. Billy K.'s Saloon served as a saloon from approximately 1894 until after 1909. It too was a shop thereafter.¹⁶

¹³As of June 20, 1994, according to a Marquette Realty sign in the building's window.

¹⁴Sanborn-Perris maps of 1894, 1901, 1909, and 1927. According to City Clerk-Treasurer records, Jim Paczkowski (presumably the "Jimmy" in question) is the current owner.

¹⁵Further evidence that the two buildings were erected independently can be seen by the inconsistency of construction materials used. In 1894, according the Sanborn-Perris map, the larger building was slate-roofed, while the smaller one was shingled. This suggests different building agendas.

¹⁶Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello from 1894, 1901, 1909, and 1927.

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Montello Commercial Historic District
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- [Map #14] 62 West Montello Street—Gilroy Hotel c.1890 C
[Map #15] 66 West Montello Street—Reetz Store 1890¹⁷ C
[Map #16] 70 West Montello Street—General Store c.1890 C

These three Italianate buildings are located in a row on the south side of West Montello Street. All use similar ornamental devices and methods of surface treatment: stepped cornice bracket motifs that are repeated on the window hood molds and unified massing achieved through the use of similar frontal parapets and stringcourses. Each building's first-floor facade has been extensively altered by the addition of overhangs, aluminum siding, and new veneers. All retain their brick upper facades, which are painted brown, off-white, and white, respectively. 66 West Montello Street retains historic integrity despite deteriorating cornice. The upper facades of 62 and 70 West Montello Street are remarkably intact, however.

Other

Described herein are buildings—primarily adjunct outbuildings—that are, for lack of a better label, deemed "astyletic." Many of these are dilapidated because they are located off of public streets and are strictly utilitarian in function; that is, they are not required to have their facades maintained to the same degree as residential and commercial architecture. Several are older than they appear at first, as facade-work of more recent origin cloaks their original construction. Additionally, the District's only structure (the West Montello Street bridge) and site (the granite quarry) are considered herein. Also included are buildings that are of more recent provenience.

Main Street

- [Map #1a] 14-20 Main Street—Outbuilding Behind Commercial Block c.1950 NC

This simple, gabled structure is of cinder block and wood slat construction. Several of the blocks appear to be newer because of their less soiled surfaces. A large, sliding metal door reveals this building's function as a garage.

- [Map #2a] 22 Main Street—Outbuilding Behind Furniture Shop/Masonic Lodge c.1890+ NC

This gabled structure now serves as a double-vehicle garage, but probably once was a barn. The barn-like massing and intact hay-loft door are testimony to this. The entire building is covered with corrugated metal. A stone foundation—barely visible beneath the modern facade—betrays this building's true age.

West Montello Street

- [Map #28] Old Montello Granite Company Quarry 1879+ C

This site is irrevocably bound to Montello's growth as a city.¹⁸ For almost a century, the rock formation was the principal source of economic livelihood for the local citizenry. Quarrying has reduced the size of "the Hill" while at the same time increasing the diameter and depth of the hole. This has been filled with water, and acts as visual landmark in the Montello downtown.

¹⁷ A second-story plaque designates "W. Reetz" as the original owner and 1890 as the year of construction.

¹⁸ See "Montello Granite & the Montello Granite Company" in Section 8 for a historical overview of the quarry.

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[Map #26] 5 West Montello Street--Daggett Realty c.1960 NC

This contemporary office building occupies a lot east of the Montello River [SEE PHOTO 9]. The gentle pitch of the roof and rough courses of variably-sized brick evoke, albeit distantly, the Prairie Style architecture so prevalent in the Midwest. Moreover, the building's low, single-story profile lends to the sensation of "ground-hugging" which is common to such designs. Fenestration dominates the front facade. This building does not meet the age requirements for contributing status.

[Map #8] Bridge Over Montello River 1948¹⁹ NC

This steel plate-girder bridge spans the narrow Montello River just west of the intersection of Main Street and West Montello Street. Erected in 1948, it was resurfaced with a concrete overlay in 1980. It is 36'-6" long, 56'-5" wide. This structure does not meet the age requirements for contributing status.

[Map #23a] 19-25 West Montello Street--Outbuilding Behind Store c.1900^o NC

This irregular building is actually an amalgam of two buildings: a gabled two-and-one-half story carriage house, and a flat-roofed, single story garage. Several garage and standard-sized doors have altered the integrity of the older carriage house. The latter building, constructed of cinder block, overwhelms the original structure.

[Map #21a] 29 West Montello Street--Outbuilding Behind Roskie Store c.1920 NC

This concrete garage is not unlike that at 19-25 West Montello Street. In fact, due to their close proximity, it is likely that both were built nearly contemporaneously.

An insignificant outbuilding, it has two entrances for vehicles, both supported by wood frames. Asphalt sheets in dilapidated condition cover the shed-roofed structure.

[Map #11a] 32 West Montello Street--Outbuilding Behind Grocery c.1900 C

[Map #11b] 32 West Montello Street--Outbuilding Behind Grocery c.1920 C

Of all the outbuildings in the district, the earlier of the two here maintains the most integrity. Its gabled, two-and-one-half story facade combines three types of building materials: concrete blocks at the first story (scored in a grid-like pattern, and with an exposed summer beam and front girt); rusticated concrete block on the second story (similar to that employed

¹⁹State of Wisconsin Department of Transportation, bridge card number B-39-970. Located in Central Office bridge files.

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at 22 Main Street); and wooden slats beneath the gable. Two second-story hay-loft doors reveal this building's original function as a carriage house.

The second outbuilding is an L-shaped garage combining concrete blocks with sliding wood garage doors. Its integrity is intact.

[Map #12a] 36 West Montello Street--Outbuilding Behind Commercial Block c.1970 NC

This gabled, single garage is non-contributing due to its recent date of construction.

[Map #13a] 44-50 West Montello Street--Outbuilding Behind Commercial Block c.1910+ NC

This building has two distinct parts: a two-story, gabled carriage house, and a one-story, shed-roofed addition with a double door and no fenestration. Both parts are constructed primarily of concrete blocks, which have been painted white. Despite the early date of the carriage house portion, the building's overall integrity does not warrant contributing status.

Queen Anne and Queen Anne style-influenced

Main Street

[Map #7] 1 Main Street--W. H. Murphy Store/Bank of Montello Block 1899 C
5 Main Street--Patrick M. Sisk Block 1899 C

With its irregular massing, variety of textures, and projecting turret, this corner building [SEE PHOTO 11] is the best example of commercial Queen Anne style influence in downtown Montello. Though its projecting polygonal turret make it steadfastly Queen Anne, motifs typical of other styles also do appear. The egg-and-dart molding found on 1 Main Street's facade is a classical detail, whereas the dogtooth panels incorporated in to the walls are more indicative of the Italianate style. However, these elements are smaller in scale and less critical to the overall design than those that are Queen Anne.

One Main Street, originally the Bank of Montello, is located at the corner of Main and Montello streets--the most prominent lot in the downtown. The second story of this building displays the majority of its architectural features. Projecting out from the northeast corner of the building is a turret with a pavilion-shaped roof and wood-panelled sides. The turret was recently repaired, because part of its wood frame and exterior wood panels were rotted. Along the roofline is a denticulated metal cornice. Decorative scrolls mark the ends of this cornice, and separate it from the cornice of the adjacent 5 Main Street, which has a different design. Flat arches surmount its five second-story windows, and the sills are stone. There are decorative panels filled with brick laid in a dogtooth pattern above each of these windows. At this level on the north and east facades, there are also granite panels inscribed "W. H. Murphy 1899."

The entrance to 1 Main Street stands at the corner of the main downtown intersection. The wood and glass door is modern, and the original transom above it has been filled with brick. A flat arch surmounts this opening. The first story has two large openings--both partially enclosed with wood panels--one on each of the principal facades. These openings have a stone sill below, and decorative metal entablature above with an egg-and-dart molding. The foundation is granite, from the quarry that was located almost directly across the street.

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Extant interior features are: the bank vault, manufactured by Diebold in 1915; a small amount of the original marble wainscot; and a section of tile floor at the entrance. Modern wood panelling and vinyl floor covering complete the present interior.

The two-story Queen Anne-style-influenced building known as 5 Main Street is located next to 1 Main St. Like 1 Main Street, the second story of 5 Main Street includes all the extant architectural features. Decorative brackets support the cornice, and larger brackets flank its ends. On the right side of the top floor is a polygonal oriel window. It is sided with horizontal wood panels, and its three windows are modern with metal surrounds. The left side of the facade has a single window with a stilted segmental arch above. A decorative dogtooth panel is featured above this opening, matching the panels at 1 Main Street and common to other commercial structures in Montello. There is a small granite panel inscribed "P. M. Sisk 1899" just to the right of this brick detail—a reference to Patrick Sisk, who ran a store and later a saloon at this location.

West Montello Street

[Map #23] 19 West Montello Street—Post Office/ Jewelry 1900 C

A panel near the cornice indicates that this two-story Queen Anne style-influenced building was constructed in 1900. Another inscription, probably indicating the original owner's name, is also included on that plaque, but is illegible from street level. Two freestanding iron columns flank the recessed central entrance of this building, supporting the second story and allowing for more fenestration. The display window surrounds here may be original. A second, off-set door leads to second-floor apartments. Glass blocks have replaced the transom light over this door. Two polygonal oriel windows dominate the second story. Diagonal and vertical wooden panels beneath the oriel windows are also probably original. An elaborate cornice, with corbelled brick brackets and recessed cruciform patterns increase the plasticity of the upper facade. It is constructed of brick, which is painted a cream color. This commercial building has served, over time, such varied functions as post office and jewelry store.²⁰

[Map #20] 31 West Montello Street—M. H. Pratt Drugstore c.1895 C

A semi-circular wooden, four-window oriel (one-over-one light, double-hung sash) dominates the second story of this building, indicating yet another Queen Anne architectural motif in the Montello downtown. Beside it is a single window with one-over-one light, double-hung sash, with an Italianate hood-mold that has been painted a darker brown so as to contrast with the building's light yellow painted brick facade. The cornice has been removed from this building, as evidenced by a laterally-running "shadow" across the top of the facade where it once was located. Between the two stories, an asphalt-shingled pent roof has been added to shield the ground floor from direct sunlight and precipitation; this is a recent addition. The recessed first-floor entry is centrally located and flanked by plate-glass windows. Framing these windows is a wall surface clad in stone veneer. The transom above the main door is probably original. A second door, off axis, leads to upstairs apartments. This building has served as a drugstore for most of its existence.

²⁰Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello, 1901 and 1909. Later maps indicate the presence of a "shop."

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Eclectic

West Montello Street

[Map #22] 25 West Montello Street-Grocery c.1895 C

The asymmetrical facade of this building incorporates stylistic elements of both the Italianate and Queen Anne styles. Its distinguishing feature is a large second-story oriel window. Here, unlike the adjacent 19 West Montello Street, the oriel is rounded and not faceted. A second window is situated next to this four-windowed bay; all of these windows are one-over-one light, double-hung sash. The building's cornice is composed of two courses of dogtooth brickwork, painted white to offer contrast with the rest of the unpainted, brown brick facade. On the ground floor, a modern wood-shingle pent roof, stone veneer, and plate-glass windows have concealed much of the originality in design that the building might once have possessed. Over the years this building has served as a grocery and general store.²¹

[Map #12] 36 West Montello Street-Commercial Block C
West Side: Dry Goods, Restaurant c.1908
East Side: Saloon c.1893

These two two-story buildings [SEE PHOTO 12] combine stylistic elements of both the Italianate and Queen Anne. A simple, corbelled cornice and the overall flat treatment of the facade establish an Italianate massing, while the two second-story bays (one at the building's side) are indicative of the Queen Anne. Relieving arches over the second-story windows and panels inset with rusticated stone are typical of the Italianate. Like 44-50 West Montello Street, this block is actually two distinct buildings with a common veneer (in this case, the stone siding on the first-story), which creates the appearance of a single building. Further emphasizing this is an asphalt-shingled pent roof which runs the entire length of the two buildings, and a uniformly painted brick facade. The two buildings rise to different heights (the smaller of the two lacks a parapet), however, so this duality is readily apparent.

The larger of the two buildings (west) was a restaurant and a dry goods store in 1909 and an unspecified shop in 1927, while the smaller building was a saloon from before 1894 until after 1927.²² A supper club, "Ben Deano's," recently occupied the combined buildings.²³

[Map #18] 37 West Montello Street-Samuel Erbe's Hardware c.1893 C

The second-story of the facade of this commercial vernacular building has both Italianate and Queen Anne features. Vertically-striated metal siding covers the upper part of the first story and lower portion of the second. The rest of the second story is brick, painted a peach color. A single, one-over-one light, double-hung sash window with an Italianate hood mold appears on the second story. Adjacent to it is a three-sided oriel, which is undoubtedly a later addition, as the original window hood mold can be seen poking out from beneath. This oriel window interjects a Queen Anne stylistic

²¹Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello, 1894, 1901, and 1909. By 1927 the store is labelled "shop."

²²Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello, 1894, 1901, 1909 and 1927.

²³Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office inventory cards, 1980 survey.

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presence into an otherwise Italianate composition. The cornice employs brackets and dogtooth ornamentation. Samuel Erbe's hardware store occupied this building during its early years.

Georgian Revival

East Park Street

[Map #27] 15 East Park Street–Montello Granite Company Office 1919²⁴ C

Composed of rusticated concrete block, this Georgian Revival building was the headquarters for the Montello Granite Company. The single-story office building has a gently pitched hip roof and two-over-two light sash windows on each of its facades. It is rectangular in plan, and incorporates a corner entrance that is approached by a small flight of steps. A decorative cornice surrounds the facade of the building immediately below the overhang of the roof. Such classical detailing and rough symmetry are characteristic of the style.

Commercial Vernacular

Main Street

[Map #6] 9 Main Street–Jaster Hardware 1914²⁵ C

This simple commercial vernacular building displays few architectural features. The material is red brick with mortar stained to match. There are three windows across the second story. Each has a flat brick relieving arch above, in addition to a wooden surround and sill. The one-over-one light, double-hung sashes are modern replacements. Two dogtooth panels are located above the windows right and left of center. The cornice is metal with decorative corbels at the ends.

The first story has been entirely remodelled with the addition of a contemporary storefront, executed in mid-1960s.²⁶ The bottom portion is granite, the windows and doors plate-glass, and the upper section is covered by vertical metal siding which alternates red and white stripes, keeping with the traditional barber shop theme. To the right of the main entrance is a second door which leads directly upstairs.

[Map #5] 11 Main Street–Hardware Store c.1945 C

²⁴A plaque on the principal facade reads "Montello Granite Co. 1919."

²⁵A granite plaque above the second story reads "R. Jaster 1914." This is a reference to R. J. Jaster who, with his wife Lena B., owned the property when the current building was constructed.

²⁶According to interviews with Robert William Zellmer (June 20, 1994), owner and operator of "Bob's Hometown Barber," another barber was located at this location for 39 years prior to his arrival. Zellmer's barber shop celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1994.

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This unremarkable two-story building meets the fifty years age requirement and is considered a contributing element in this district. The facade is yellow-brown brick on the second story, and has a contemporary metal and glass storefront on the first. All of the windows and doors are modern. The building rests on a concrete foundation, and is crowned by an unadorned cornice of the same material.

This property was built as a hardware store in the 1940s. Between then and now it has been vacant for intermittent periods. Jane Arbeiter was the long-time owner; she recently sold it to Virgil and Sandy Smith.²⁷

West Montello Street

[Map #9] 22 West Montello Street-Grill 1950²⁸ NC

The first story here is dominated by two plate-glass windows. An off-set door leads into the bar, while another door alongside the neighboring Montello River leads upstairs. The second story has a fixed plate-glass window flanked by two casement windows, and another single casement window. A thin, undetailed cornice offers the only decoration on this otherwise austere facade. Because this building does not meet age requirements, it is not considered contributing.

[Map #21] 29 West Montello Street-Roskie Store c.1901 NC

Aluminum siding now covers most of the structural brick-work of this austere, two-story Commercial Vernacular structure: it is because of this addition that the building is not eligible. A metal cornice with end brackets is the only decorative device left visible on this building. A recessed central door leads into the restaurant, while another door to the side provides access to second-story rental space. The unusual configuration of windows on the second story—a single one-over-one light, double sash which is flush with the siding and a recessed group of three windows adjacent—suggests that a bay similar to those in 21 and 31 West Montello Street might have been part of the original design. This building was originally the Roskie Store and has served as a general store for most of its existence.²⁹

[Map #19] 35 West Montello Street-Law Office c.1970 NC

This contemporary single-story cream brick building is the least ambitious design on the block. Its doorway is off-set and recessed. Two small windows, set into what was once probably a single, plate-glass window frame which is now boarded over, represent the only fenestration on this diminutive building—the only single-story structure (without an artificially heightening parapet) on West Montello Street.

²⁷Information supplied by neighbor Robert William Zellmer, interview on June 20, 1994.

²⁸A second story plaque indicates this.

²⁹Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello, 1901 and 1909. By 1927, this property is labelled "shop".

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PROPERTY INVENTORY

C=Contributing, NC=Non-Contributing.

<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Status</u>
1	14-20 Main	Commercial Block	1893	C
1a	14-20 Main	Outbuilding	c.1950	NC
2	22 Main	Furniture, Masonic Lodge	1905	C
2a	22 Main	Outbuilding	c.1890+	NC
3	17 and 19 Main	Fountain House	1899	C
4	15 Main	Saloon	c.1900	C
5	11 Main	Hardware	c.1945	C
6	9 Main	Jaster Hardware	1914	C
7	1 and 5 Main	Bank of Montello Block	1899	C
8	Over Montello River	Bridge	1948	NC
9	22 W. Montello	Grill	1950	NC
10	28 W. Montello	Agricultural Implements	c.1905	C
11	32 W. Montello	Grocery	c.1889	C
11a	32 W. Montello	Outbuilding	c.1900	C
11b	32 W. Montello	Outbuilding	c.1920	C
12	36 W. Montello	Commercial Block	c.1893 (east) c.1908 (west)	C
12a	36 W. Montello	Outbuilding	c.1970	NC
13	44-50 W. Montello	Commercial Block	c.1895	C
13a	44-50 W. Montello	Outbuilding	c.1950	NC
14	62 W. Montello	Gilroy Hotel	c.1890	C
15	66 W. Montello	Reetz Store	1890	C
16	70 W. Montello	General Store	c.1890	C
17	39 W. Montello	Furniture, I.O.O.F. Lodge	1886	C
18	37 W. Montello	Samuel Erbe's Hardware	c.1893	C

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<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Status</u>
19	35 W. Montello	Law Offices	c.1970	NC
20	31 W. Montello	M. H. Pratt Drugstore	c.1895	C
21	29 W. Montello	Roskie Store	c.1901	NC
21a	29 W. Montello	Outbuilding	c.1920	NC
22	25 W. Montello	Grocery	c.1895	C
23	19 W. Montello	Post Office, Jewelry	1900	C
23a	19 W. Montello	Outbuilding	c.1900	NC
24	15 and 17 W. Montello	Millinery	c.1893	NC
25	13 W. Montello	Grocery	c.1893	NC
26	5 W. Montello	Daggett Realty	c.1960	NC
27	5 E. Park	Montello Granite Co. Office	1919	C
28	Abandoned Quarry	Montello Granite Co. Quarry	1879+	C

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Granite company employees' needs for places to shop, eat, and entertain themselves are evidenced by the existence of the commercial district and its proximity to the quarry. Montello granite was not only an economic presence, but a physical one as well. Architectural detailing in the downtown district often employed the local stone.³² Such cases are noted in the text of the individual building descriptions in Section 7 (e.g., 1 and 5 Main Street, 12 Main Street).

Under National Register **Criterion C**, the Montello Commercial Historic District is locally significant for **Architecture** because it represents a compact and contiguous physical entity composed almost entirely of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings. In terms of density, scale, building type, age, and style, these buildings create an environment that is visually discrete from its primarily residential surroundings. Of the 36 properties within the proposed district, 23 are contributing and 13 are not. Significant dates denote years of construction of several prominent buildings in the downtown, as well as the opening of the quarry. The period of historical significance begins with the earliest contributing property in the district, the Montello Granite Company quarry off of West Montello Street, and concludes with the most recent, a hardware store at 11 Main Street, which was constructed in 1945.³³ Although the Montello Granite Company remained in operation beyond 1945 (it closed in the 1970s), its most productive years fall within the period of significance.

Architecture

Architectural styles popular in Wisconsin and across the country in the last quarter of the nineteenth century prevail in the Montello Commercial Historic District. Almost all of these buildings were built for mercantile use, and as much as their function has governed their form, they are all very similar in design. The majority of the buildings are two stories, and incorporate comparable cornices, bays, fenestration, and facade ornament: the resultant composition is a visually unified one. Few modern intrusions detract from the late nineteenth-century character established by these properties. Remodelling, primarily of first-story storefronts, has occurred, but otherwise the buildings retain much of their original design integrity.

Styles prominently represented in this district include Italianate, Queen Anne, and Vernacular Commercial. To a lesser degree, Boom Town buildings, Eclectic buildings (drawing motifs from both the Italianate and Queen Anne), and a single Period Georgian Revival building are also seen. Astylistic buildings (such as outbuildings), more modern buildings, structures and sites are considered (in Section 7) under the blanket heading of "Other." All architectural styles in Montello conform to general guideline descriptions as given in the State Historical Society's Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Volume 2 (hereafter cited as CRM).

³² One might logically expect Montello granite to have been used more extensively in local construction. This is not the case. Granite was universally expensive, and Montello granite—renowned for its hardness—was particularly costly, even for locals who could eliminate the higher fee resulting from transportation. Furthermore, a mere 5 percent of all the granite extracted from the Montello quarry was of saleable caliber. The relative scarcity of the stone increased its value. See *Portage*.

³³ The I. O. O. F. Lodge of 1886, located at 39 West Montello Street, is the oldest extant *building* in the historic district.

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According to CRM, the **Italianate Style** [SEE PHOTO 10] was popular in Wisconsin from around 1850 until 1880. Although exemplified in works of domestic architecture, loose interpretations of the style did occur in commercial structures. Montello's downtown is replete with such buildings. Characteristics of the Italianate seen locally include rectangularity of massing, the use of string courses, relieving arches, bracket-supported eaves, and in particular, windows with hood molds. Two of the commercial blocks (14-20 Main Street and 44-50 West Montello Street) are typically Italianate, as is the more elaborate 39 West Montello Street.

Unlike its description of the Italianate style, CRM's account of the **Queen Anne Style** [SEE PHOTO 11] makes only nominal distinction between residential and commercial architecture, due to the low frequency of the latter. Queen Anne (1880-1910) houses are characterized by surface plasticity and irregularity, as achieved through the use of complex volumes and decoration. Queen Anne commercial architecture, in contrast, often must conform to the limited space of a cramped lot, and must achieve some cohesiveness of facade design with its neighbors. Therefore, it cannot indulge in the spatially-explosive, chromatically-lurid exuberance of its domestic kin. Queen Anne commercial buildings in Montello—and in general—are relatively staid. Decoration is limited to second-story bay windows, occasional brick pattern-work, and in the rare example, a turret or tower. One Main Street is one such case; a corner lot allows for the incorporation of a second-story, faceted turret.

The **Georgian Revival**, like other period revival styles, appeared in Wisconsin between the years 1900 and 1940. According to CRM, "Formal, symmetrical facades, rectangular plans, and hipped roofs" characterize the style. The historic district's only example of Georgian Revival, 15 East Park Street, adheres to this canon.

The **Commercial Vernacular** is not so much a style as it is a building type. "Commercial Vernacular" is the default term commonly given to "simply-designed commercial buildings of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (CRM). Nevertheless, certain characteristics can consistently be found: large windows on the ground floor for displaying merchandise; simple second-story windows, often with relieving arches; decorative cornices, etc. Several examples of Commercial Vernacular exist in downtown Montello, including 9 and 11 Main Street. 35 West Montello Street (c.1970) is a late example of this type of building.

The most blatant identifying characteristic of **Boom Town** architecture is the exaggerated front parapet. Named after the quickly-erected, shanty store-front buildings of Old West movie fame, this style is less prevalent in Wisconsin than elsewhere in the United States. Montello's downtown is unusual in having three examples of Boom Town architecture (13-17 West Montello Street) in close proximity. Despite their novelty, the buildings are not good illustrations of the style. Their parapet walls do not date from the period commonly associated with Boom Town architecture. That is, they are intentionally quaint and archaic: they try to suggest "oldness."

The buildings deemed **Eclectic** [SEE PHOTO 12] in Downtown Montello combine elements typical of the Italianate and Queen Anne styles. 36 West Montello Street is a characteristically Eclectic building.

The Montello Commercial Historic District is of local significance to the area of architecture because it contains nearly all of the historic buildings that have been associated with Montello's commercial life. The district forms a significant and clearly distinguishable entity that is clearly differentiated from the areas surrounding it by building type. District boundaries encompass the most intact portion of the historic commercial core of Montello, which has always been centered around the intersection of Montello and Main streets. The buildings within these boundaries are mostly good representative examples of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century commercial buildings that are significant collectively because they embody the evolution of architectural styles and building types associated with commercial activity in Montello during the period of significance.

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Historical Background

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 Native American settlement. 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.

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 downtown, and constitutes part of Montello's residential district.

The section of Montello where the historic district is located 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.³⁴ Two additional plats were filed for record as parts of North Montello during 1856 and 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" which would eventually become home to the Montello Granite Company's principal quarry. These two geographical features became the main source of the town's economic livelihood, and, especially in the case of the granite hill and

³⁴Before deciding on "North Montello," locals had even considered "Darttville" for the name of their town. Needless to say, this particular appellation was suggested by one of the members of the Dartt family.

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quarry, an object of civic pride. Photographs chronicling Montello's early halcyon days are often careful to include, as backdrop, the river or hill.³⁵

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 might 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 stop on a "spur" of the Wisconsin Central Railroad, a grand trunk line which ran between Chicago and St. Paul, via Milwaukee. Such transportation gave 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.³⁶

These early Montello residents were understandably filled with optimism about their shared 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. It could, and did, import goods, which were sold in stores downtown to nearby farmers and homesteaders.³⁷ The commercial district of Montello flourished. During the period of significance (1879-1945), Main and West Montello streets contained at various times 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 preceding list describes only the most notable types of commercial activities that took place within the Montello Commercial Historic District during the period of significance. Never-the-less, these types are representative of commercial activities found in other Wisconsin communities of the period and the buildings in the district that are associated with them are representative examples of the buildings associated with these activities. Consequently, the district is locally significant for its associations with the significance area of Commerce because its boundaries contain the most intact grouping of buildings associated with the traditional commercial core of the city. In addition, the boundaries also encompass the principal surviving resources associated with the Montello Granite Company, whose history follows. This enterprise (which is located immediately adjacent to the commercial core of the city) was the major

³⁵For examples, see images in the photographic collection of the Marquette County Historical Society.

³⁶Biographical 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 were first- or second-generation New Yorkers. This is understandable given that New York was 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.

³⁷For example, see 28 West Montello Street, wherein "agricultural implements" were once marketed.

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Montello Commercial Historic District
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employer in Montello for more than 100 years and the income it generated was responsible for the existence of many of the district's other commercial enterprises.

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 products of this "elliptical shaped, rounded mound of pink granite, 1/3 mile long, 40 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.³⁸ An average of 186,000 pounds of pressure was required to crack a 3-inch cube of Montello granite.

The history of the granite company begins, of all places, in Chicago. In 1879, Chicago businessman Claude B. King, while 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 30 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 of 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.

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 stood as late as 1962), several buildings for stone cutting, granite bins, derricks, and others.³⁹ None of these ephemeral structures—many of which were little more than sheds—remain to this day, except as images in old photographs.⁴⁰

³⁸ 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.

³⁹ Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello from 1894, 1901, 1909, 1927. See also *Portage*.

⁴⁰ Because the demolished quarry buildings appear to have been shanty-like in construction, and because they were never intended as permanent structures (the ever-changing nature of the site necessitated work structures that could be moved with the expansion of the quarry), their loss is not considered compromising to the historic district's overall integrity. CRM acknowledges that many of these "temporary or semi-permanent working facilities" have, over

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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.⁴¹

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 80 to 100 men 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 unique properties of the product itself, which was so durable that temperature and extreme environmental conditions—in particular frost—affected it little. Quarrying could therefore continue year-round. Conversely, quarries with less resilient lodes were forced to cease operations during the cold-weather months, as most weaker stone tended to crack under such inclement conditions.

Sanborn-Perris maps of Montello chart the 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 4 acres of downtown Montello.

The peak year for employment at the company was 1909, with 200 men working daily at the downtown quarry. 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, the Montello Granite Company employed only 20 to 25 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 12 people were hired at the quarry. The Montello Granite Company finally discontinued operations in 1976, after 95 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 where workers once 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 the 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.⁴² The tourism and sporting industries still exist near Montello, as lakes such as

time, been sold as scrap material during war efforts. This may have been the case at the Montello Granite Company's quarry, although no supporting evidence exists.

⁴¹This building has been significantly altered, and is therefore not incorporated within the boundaries of the historic district.

⁴²Montello Wisconsin: A Thriving and Up-to-Date City. No author given. Portage, WI: F. H. Voshardt, Publishers, c.1910.

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Buffalo, Montello, and White continue to attract vacationers. Furthermore, government, the most recession-proof of industries, draws Marquette County residents to the area.

Montello granite has not been quarried in 20 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.

Archaeological Potential

The State Historic Preservation Office's records show the presence of two archaeological sites in the immediate Montello area. Record MQ-0013 indicates a cemetery/burial site of unknown prehistoric origin "on river banks and south side of site of Montello." Record MQ-0051 documents the former presence of a campsite/village of unknown prehistoric origin "north of Fox River and east of Montello in sand blows and pasture land." This site is referred to as the "Simonson Site," after its current owner. Excavated here were "copper, lithic, and ceramic artifacts in abundance."

In addition to these findings, an unspecified number of effigy mounds once dotted the local terrain, although decades of scavenging and development have reduced most of these landscape designs to nothing. Perhaps the most conspicuous of these—had it survived—would have been the mound located "on the hill on which the old Catholic church stands."⁴³ Like the mound before it, this church was razed—this time in order to allow for the expansion of granite quarrying operations which had slowly enveloped the sanctified site.

Preservation Activity

The nomination of Montello's Commercial Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places will further the town's sense of pride and place. Hopefully, it will stimulate a greater awareness of the man-made and natural environment and encourage local preservation efforts. Design guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic commercial buildings are being prepared for Montello's downtown. The goal of these guidelines is to encourage the public and private sectors of Montello to capitalize on the town's unique qualities through the preservation of their legacy. This nomination is a first step in that direction.

⁴³"Reported by A. J. Barry, Jun., 1906" in *Wisconsin Archeologist*, Vol. 5, Nos. 3 and 4, p.352. A. J. Barry was the cashier at the Bank of Montello (1 Main Street) in the 1880s and 1890s.

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Montello Commercial Historic District
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin

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Approved 2/87

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Montello Commercial Historic District
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin

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UTM REFERENCES

E	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/7/6/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/4/1/0</u>	F	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/8/0/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/4/1/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
G	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/8/0/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/3/4/0</u>	H	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/8/7/5</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/3/0/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
I	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/8/7/5</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/2/0/0</u>	J	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/8/0/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/2/0/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
K	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/8/2/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/0/6/0</u>	L	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/7/2/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/0/4/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
M	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/7/2/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/1/4/0</u>	N	<u>1/6</u>	<u>3/1/2/6/7/0</u>	<u>4/8/5/1/1/2/0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the northeast corner of the lot line of 14-20 Main Street, then continuing south along rear lot lines to the south lot line of 22 Main Street, then proceeding west along this line to the west lot line, then north for approximately 60 feet, then across Main Street to the south lot line of 17 and 19 Main Street, then west along this line to the rear lot line, then northerly along the rear lot lines of 15, 11, 9, and 5 and 1 Main Street, which abut the meandering Montello River, until the south curblines of West Montello Street is reached, then proceeding west along the south edge of the steel girder bridge until the east lot line of 22 West Montello Street is reached, then continuing south along this lot line until the rear lot line is reached, then progressing west along the rear lot lines of 28, 32, 36, 44-50, 62, and 66 Main Street until the west lot line of 70 West Montello Street, then north until the south curb line of Montello Street is reached, then east along this line for approximately 110 feet, then north across West Montello Street and continuing up along the west lot line of 39 West Montello Street until reaching the rear lot line, then east along the rear lot lines of 37, 35, 31, 29, 25, 19, 17, 15, and 13 West Montello Street, then south along the east lot line of 13 West Montello Street until the north edge of the aforementioned bridge, then east along that bridge to the southwest corner of the west side lot line of 5 West Montello Street is reached. Then, north along this lot line to the rear lot line, then east along this line, past the east lot line, continuing for approximately 25 feet to the western bank of the abandoned quarry. Then, continuing north and east along the quarry's banks until reaching a point that is directly south of a southerly continuation of the west lot line of 5 East Park Street, then north along this lot line, crossing East Park Street, to the west lot line of 5 East Park Street, then north to the rear lot line, then east along this line to the east lot line, then south on that line, continuing past the south lot line of 5 East Park Street, across East Park Street again, and continuing east to the northern bank of the quarry, south along the quarry's eastern bank, and west along the quarry's south bank, to a point directly north of the east curblines of Main Street, then south, across East Montello Street, along the east curblines of East Montello Street, continuing for 150 feet, then east along the north lot line of 14-20 Main Street to the northeast corner, where the boundary description began.

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VERBAL JUSTIFICATION OF BOUNDARY

This boundary encompasses the historic commercial buildings that comprise Montello's downtown, and the abandoned quarry located nearby. Only certain blocks of two streets—Main and West Montello—are included in the district. The purpose of this is to ensure, whenever possible, that buildings which would otherwise compromise the homogeneity and overall integrity of the district are excluded. The district is made up of attached, two-story buildings which historically have served as retail stores. In contrast, the built-up areas outside of the district to the south, east, and west are composed primarily of free-standing, residential structures. The density of structures decreases beyond the boundary limits. Another consistency occurs in the construction dates. The majority of buildings in the downtown were built in the forty year period between 1880 and 1920. The Montello Commercial Historic District can thus be seen as a discrete entity in two regards: physically (through its uniformity of building type), and temporally.

Also included in the historic district boundary is the abandoned granite quarry *cum* park. Because the economic livelihood of Montello revolved around the granite quarrying industry, and because the location of the downtown was contingent on the presence of the quarry, the site has been inexorably associated with the downtown that it fostered. It is therefore considered as a contributing part of the district.

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Montello Commercial Historic District

Section number Owners Page 1 Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin

BUILDING ADDRESSES AND CURRENT OWNERS, AS OF AUGUST 1994

Old Montello Granite Company Quarry
Irv Daggett

15 and 17 West Montello Street
Raymond McKenzie

1 Main Street
Karen Smith

19 West Montello Street
Deserie Simpson

5 Main Street
Karen Warzeka

22 West Montello Street
John and Louise Haggerty

9 Main Street
Robert William Zellmer

25 West Montello Street
Ken Bentley

11 Main Street
Virgil Smith Trust

28 West Montello Street
Ronald and Corinne Heilmeier

14 Main Street
Irene Krueger

29 West Montello Street
Barbara Stueck

15 Main Street
Pat Glaab, Chris Todd

31 West Montello Street
Fred Hough

16 Main Street
Irene Krueger

32 West Montello Street
Karen Smith

17 and 19 Main Street
R. Dennis Whitemarsh

35 West Montello Street
Bennett and Bennett, Atty.

18 Main Street
R. Dennis Whitemarsh

36 West Montello Street
David and Alice Wielgosh

20 Main Street
R. Dennis Whitemarsh

37 West Montello Street
Clarice Cotter

22 Main Street
The Montello Masonic Lodge

39 West Montello Street
Jim Paczkowski

5 West Montello Street
Irv Daggett

44 West Montello Street
William Knickerbocker

Bridge Over Montello River
State of Wisconsin

46-50 West Montello Street
Greg Wright

13 West Montello Street
Shirley Drinkwater

62 West Montello Street
Diane Hunt

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Section number Owners Page 2

66 West Montello Street
Robert Blank

70 West Montello Street
D. W. Realty

5 East Park Street
Bette Krueger

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Section number Photos Page 1

PHOTOS

Photo 1 of 12.

Streetscape, West Side of Main Street (Map Nos. 3-7).
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Northwest.

Photo 2 of 12.

Streetscape, East Side of Main Street (Map Nos. 1, 2).
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Southeast.

Photo 3 of 12.

Streetscape, North Side of West Montello Street (Map Nos. 22-24).
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Northwest.

Photo 4 of 12.

Streetscape, North Side of West Montello Street (Map Nos. 18-20).
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Northwest.

Photo 5 of 12.

Streetscape, South Side of West Montello Street (Map Nos. 12-16).
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Southwest.

Photo 6 of 12.

Streetscape, South Side of West Montello Street (Map Nos. 9-11).
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Southeast.

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Photo 7 of 12.

Quarry (Map No. 28), from East Montello Street.
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Northwest.

Photo 8 of 12.

66 West Montello Street (Map No. 15).
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Southeast.

Photo 9 of 12.

5 West Montello Street (Map No. 26). Example of Lack of Requisite Age.
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Northwest.

Photo 10 of 12.

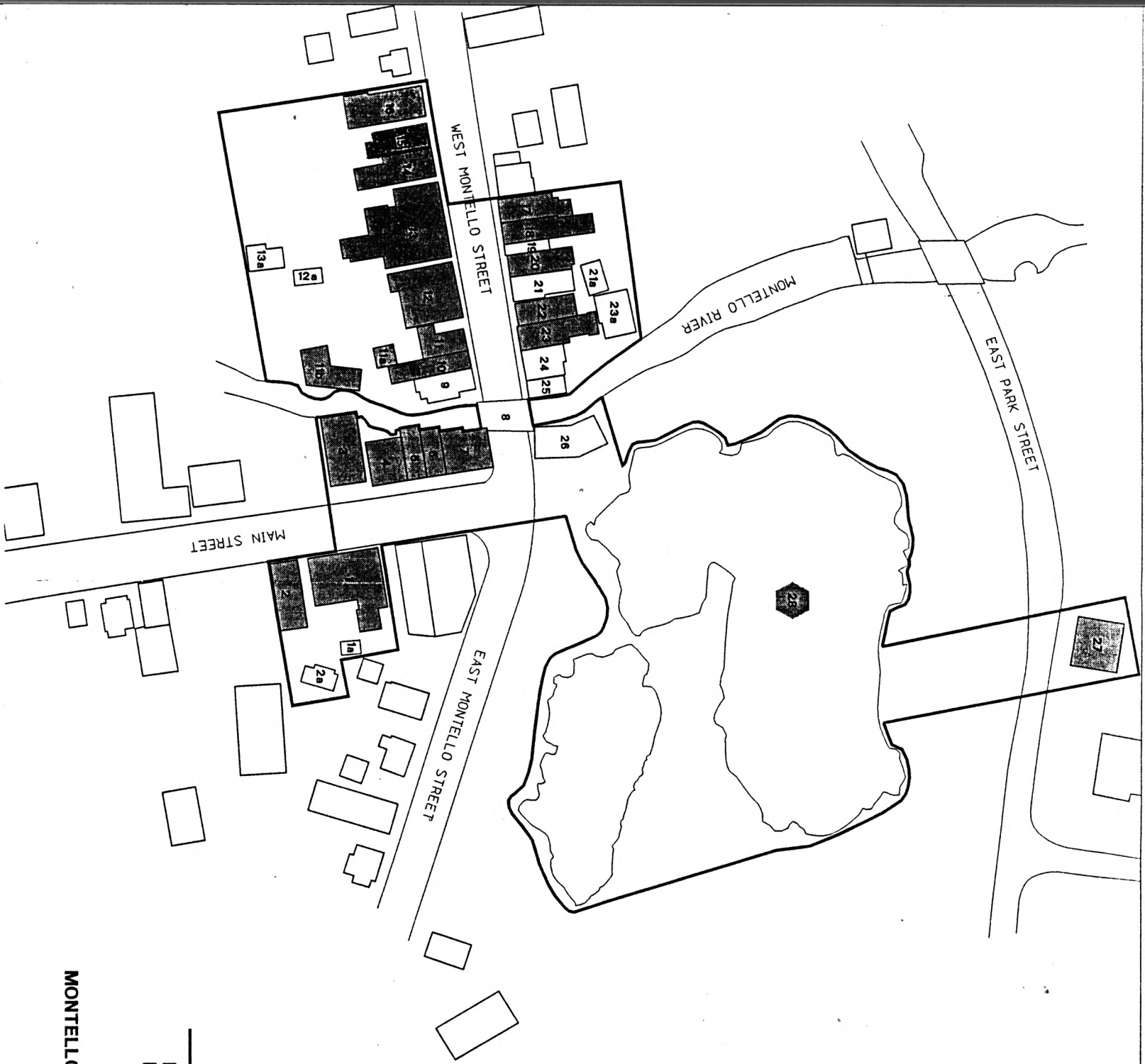
44-50 West Montello Street (Map No. 13). Example of Italianate Style.
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Southeast.

Photo 11 of 12.

1 and 5 Main Street (Map No. 7). Example of Queen Anne Style.
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking West.

Photo 12 of 12.

36 West Montello Street (Map No. 12). Example of Eclectic Design.
Montello, Marquette County, Wisconsin.
Photo by T. Nordbrock, June 20, 1994.
Negative at State Historical Society of Wisconsin.
View Looking Southeast.



KEY
 — BOUNDARY LINE
 ■ CONTRIBUTING PROPERTY
 □ NON-CONTRIBUTING PROPERTY

SCALE: 1"=120'
 0 60 120

**MONTELLO COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
 CITY OF MONTELLO
 MARQUETTE CO., WI**