

Enjoy a jaunt around Montello and learn about the rich history of this charming city.

1. Start at Krakow Memorial Fishing Area named for Andy Krakow, a Conservation Warden killed while answering a domestic disturbance call. The historical kiosk located here will tell you about the rich history here.
2. The Fox River was the super highway of transportation for thousands of years. Imagine the canoes of Indians, then fur traders traveling this river. Buffalo Lake is a widening of the Fox River. After settlement, it was dredged continuously to keep it open for barges and steam boats. The road you are walking on took shape from the dredge dumped on the shoreline. Wild rice once grew along the edges of the river, harvested by Indians and food for thousands of water fowl. Look for the American Lotus beds that are protected.



Dredge on the Fox River

3. Find the Montello Library. It is located in a warehouse building used by the railroad that once came through behind the building. Trains travelled from Packwaukee on the spur to Montello and backed out to return. The station was farther to your right if you stand by the library, along with, in 1880, a large, well appointed hotel, the Perkins House. To the left of the Library down by the lake was a large and busy Norcross lumber yard for many years.



4. Walk to the big cottonwood tree on Underwood Avenue. This was once measured as the biggest tree in Wisconsin, but has lost some of its limbs and no longer holds that title. On the hill behind the tree is the Richter house that is on the National Historic Registry. It was built in 1912 by Charles S. Richter who was the President of the Montello Granite Company. The two Montello granite columns on the porch required 6 months of polishing. Turn and look to the south of the tree and you are looking about where the Perkins House (then Montello House) stood. It burned in 1906. Take a side trip through the Montello Cemetery to view many beautiful monuments made of Montello granite that stand on some of the early settlers' and founders graves. There



Montello House

5. Now walk along Park Street and stand in front of the Courthouse. This is the second courthouse in Montello (the first burned) for Marquette County and was opened in 1916. The building is on the National Historic Registry as is the jail building behind it. Before the courthouse, there was a hotel on the hill, formerly the home of Stephen and Julia Perkins, owners of the woolen mill. It was known as the Dartt Hotel or Hotel on the Hill.



Perkins House

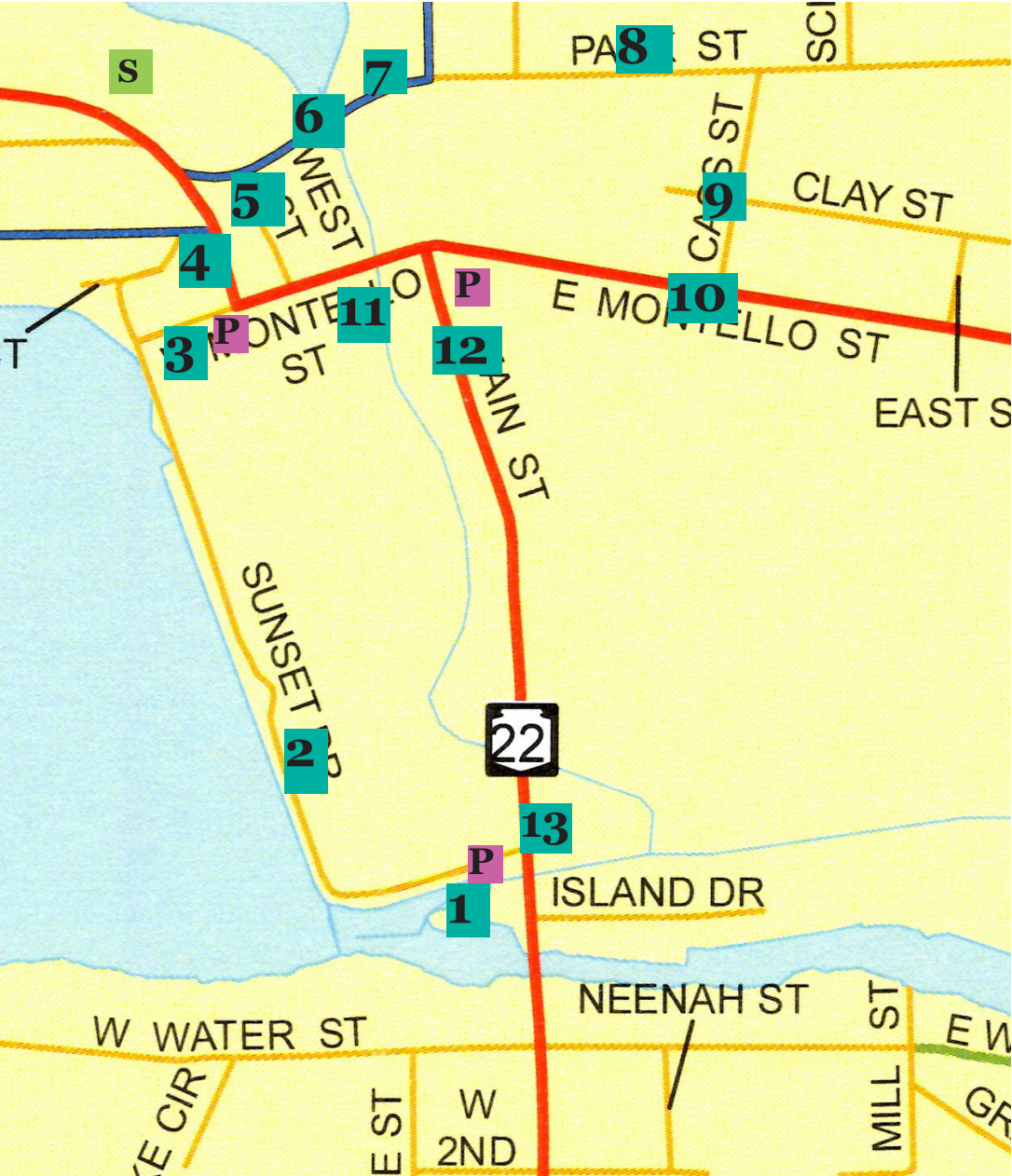
The building housed a community hall in the upper floor where dances and celebrations were held.

Take note also of the Veterans Memorial that incorporates some of the monuments placed by the War Mothers after World War I.



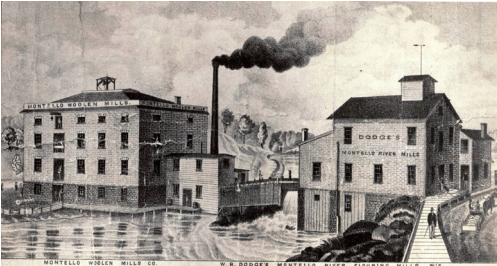
was once a brick yard located along the lake where the cemetery now is located. Walk out on the point into Well's Park just past the cemetery for a beautiful view of Montello Lake.

Across the street is the old city hall, today TW Designs.



P Parking S Side trip Montello Cemetery

6. Pause at the bridge. Montello Lake is to the north and the Montello River to the south. The lake is really a mill pond. The first dam was built by earliest settler Jason Daniels. The water powered a woolen mill and a feed mill, then the massive machinery of the granite companies. It also provided power to the City of Montello for the first street lights. The hydro building was built in 1914. Today it is a privately owned hydro power plant.



7. Walk east on Park Street. This area was once all connected to the granite quarries. Men making paving blocks lined the street. The quarry hole was one of three quarry sites in Montello. Different granite companies owned each pit at one time. The quarry hole you see is about 150 feet deep. The small office building on Park and Doty St corner was built in 1919 and housed the granite company office. The 70 foot chimney was built in 1944 and used 23,000 bricks. Today it is used by migrating chimney swifts as a roost. The Elite Marble building was the polishing shed built in 1951 after a disastrous fire.



Independent workers would set up sheds along Montello Lake and cut paving stones to sell. What is now Doty St.

8. Now take a walk east on Park Street to Clay St. You will pass a granite wall built in 1936 through the Works Progress Administration or WPA. That Montello granite wall put 22 men to work during the depression.

9. Now turn south on Cass St. It's a little climb, but stop at the intersection of Cass and Clay St. The top of the granite hill (private property now) was special to the Indians who inhabited this area for thousands of years. Settlers built a Catholic Church (see photo) there that was sold to the granite company in 1903. A new church was built down Clay St. A High School was built in 1881 that burned in 1895. Another was built in 1896 (see photo) but burned in 1926. The building you see now was built in 1914, the addition in 1939. Memories include sledding down Cass and Clay streets and a set of steps to get to the high school that ran up the granite hill by Kwik Trip today.



10. Walk down Cass to Montello St and turn right/west. The Trinity Methodist Church, now Reader's Realm Books, was built in 1867. Keep walking toward downtown/west and view the Montello Theater. It was built as an opera house before 1878 and was known as Dodge's Opera House. It's been remodeled several times, but has continuously been a theater since it was built.

Many of the houses on this street were built when the quarry was in full operation. Frank Dodge, of Dodge's Opera House lived at 28 Montello St. The photo shows him and his family on the porch. Frank lost his leg in an accident at the quarry.



Next, stop in Daggett Park and view the quarry. The waterfalls are man made, but the water fills the 80 foot hole naturally. The quarry was started in 1879 and closed in 1976 due to high cost of operation and difficulty of quarrying in the middle of a city. Numerous monuments are made of Montello granite including General Grant and Mrs. Grant's sarcophagi. At its peak, the Montello Granite Company employed over 200 workers. Citizen, realtor and Christmas tree grower Irv Daggett bought the quarry in 1977. In 1992 he built the waterfalls and placed the land in trust for public enjoyment.

The small waterfall at Hwy 23 and 22 was built by the Montello Lions in 1966.

11. Start at the Montello River and walk toward Buffalo Lake. There used to be a building that hung out over the river. It was the fire department and later a Doctor's office. Next to it is a barbershop that has been continuously a barbershop since about 1909. The building was first a grocery in 1890, then a confectionary. Here are some of the early businesses:

| Address | Used to be | Built in |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------|
| 13 W Montello | Barber Shop | Pre 1895 |
| 15 W Montello | Saloon | Pre 1895 |
| 17 W Montello | Harness | Pre 1895 |
| 21 W Montello | Post Office/Jewelry | 1900 |
| 25 W Montello | General Store | 1884 |
| 29 W Montello | Saloon | 1885 |
| 31 W Montello | Restaurant | 1884 |
| 35 W Montello | Bank | 1885 |
| 37 W Montello | Store | 1886 |
| 43 W Montello | Store & Hall Odd Fellows | 1886 |
| 47 W Montello | McCudden Furniture | 1885 |
| 49 W Montello | Millinery | Pre 1895 |
| 55 W Montello | JP Vaughn Blacksmith & Hall | 1912 |
| Cross the street, south side | | |
| 24 W Montello | Saloon J D Cotter | 1950 |
| 28 W Montello | O'Connor Farm Store | 1905 |
| 30 W Montello | J O'Donnell Store | 1899 |
| 36 W Montello | Mrs. G Krueger Saloon | 1899 |
| 38 W Montello | M O'Donnell Saloon | 1899 |
| 44 W Montello | C John Saloon G W Lange | 1894 |
| 46 W Montello | H A Freitag Butcher Shop | 1893 |
| 48 W Montello | Gorske Shoe Store | 1894 |
| 50 W Montello | Krentz/Wilde Saloon | 1901 |
| 60 W Montello | Mrs. J Gilroy Hotel | 1893 |
| 66 W Montello | Czeskleba Hardware | 1890 |
| 70 W Montello | Weseloh & Just Gen Merchant | 1890 |
| 30 E Montello | Dodge Opera House | 1878? |
| 12. Walk south on Main Street toward Krakow Park | | |
| 1 Main | Bank | 1899 |
| 5 Main | Murphy Bros Saloon | 1899 |
| 15 Main | Mrs. J Winzell Saloon | 1899 |
| 17 Main | D Wilde Hotel | 1899 |
| 29-33 Main | County Court House/Offices | 1863/1880 |
| 2 Main | M Smart Mercantile | 1909 |
| 10 Main | M Smart Drug Store | 1896 |
| 14 Main | H Pahl Bakery | 1893 |
| 18 Main | Grocery | 1893 |
| 20 Main | S Griffin Boots & Saddle | 1904 |
| 22 Main | Masonic Lodge/Furniture | 1905 |
| 38 Main | Quantius Flour & Feed | 1895 |

Historic Montello Walking Tour



Brought to you by The Montello Historic Preservation Society

Marquette County John Muir Nature and History Route





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