

## Montague House Hotel

*By Barbara Bedau Brow*  
White Lake Area Historical Society



The Montague House Hotel was built in 1871 by Messers Ferry, Dowling & Co., under the supervision of Captain S. S. Barrows. The design was furnished by George O. Garney of Chicago. The hotel fronted both Bridge (now Dowling) and Ferry streets.

Built in the form of an "L" there was 138 feet fronting on Bridge and 40 feet on Ferry. Upon entering the lobby, was the clerk's office and just down the hall was the ladies reception area beyond. There was also a separate entrance to this room from Ferry Street. Near the ladies reception area were 2 parlors for private receptions, one was 8 feet by 16 feet and the other 10 feet by 16 feet. Next was a 13 foot by 21 foot gentleman's reading room, appropriately appointed. A 30 foot by 50 foot dining room was also found on this floor which was well-lighted by 10 large windows. The cook room and laundry were in the basement, as well as the billiard room, saloon and barber shop.

On the second and third floors were the suites of rooms and single rooms with most of the suites being on the second floor. They were large, comfortable and pleasant, especially the west-facing ones which gave a fine view of White Lake.

The fourth floor was devoted to the smaller rooms. There was also a large tank on this floor which supplied all the rooms with hot and cold water. Among the other conveniences, the hotel was furnished with two bathrooms, one for the ladies and one for the gentlemen.

Just to the east of the hotel and adjoining it was the H. P. Dowling four-story building. Two stores were located in the street and basement levels, and offices were on the second floor. The third floor was fitted out as a hall, the full size of the building – 50 feet by 80 feet – with great height, making it one of the best halls in West Michigan. Mr. W. H. Kirkland was the proprietor of the Montague House Hotel.

In the Fall of 1871, the Montague House was sold to L. S. Chapin. It was destroyed by fire on 21 February 1873. Sorenson's 'Opera House was built there in 1874 and it was destroyed by fire on 23 September 1875. L.G. Ripley built his block there in 1881.