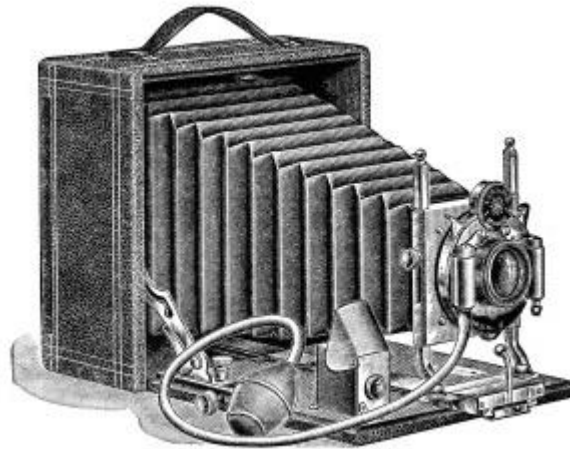


A SNAPSHOT IN TIME



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It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. This mindset would dictate that several pictures would be worth several thousand words which would tell an entire story.

Photo interpretation and analysis can provide a great deal of information but fails to provide every detail, therefore assumptions, presumptions, and presuppositions are used to fill in story gaps, and to make a story flow more readily.

This document presents an analysis of several photos believed by the author to have been taken on a sunny day in May of 1870 during the life of George E. Dowling, a business man and one of the founding fathers of Montague, Michigan.

Photo Analysis



Image 1. Ferry Dowling & Co. lumber mill

This photo was taken from the warehouse cupola of Ferry Dowling & Co. It is believed to have been taken in 1870, and shows the scow Milton being loaded with lumber. The faces peering out of the mill windows and the workers standing still/facing the camera provide evidence that this photo was a planned event. This photo event interrupted the mill operation, required coordination, and would not have occurred without the authorization of the owner, George Dowling. It is probable that Mr. Dowling hired the photographer to take this photo.

1. The U. S. flag hangs limply from the mast of the scow, signifying that there is very little breeze at the time of the photo.
2. Amongst the trees beyond the dwelling is the hint of smoke, which would indicate that someone is clearing some land, most likely for a home construction. The smoke appears to be lazily rising to the sky indicating very little breeze at the time of the photo.
3. This dwelling is located at 8679 Meade Street, and provides a reference point that will be relevant further on in this document.
4. This dwelling is located at 8734 Sheridan Street and was known as the Christian L. Streng residence in 1877. It is directly across the road (southeast) from the future George Dowling residence.

5. This smoke signifies that land clearing is underway. This spot is where George Dowling built his fine residence in 1871. This is strong evidence that the estimated year of the photo is accurate.
6. This is the Ferry Dowling & Co. boarding house located on the high bluff overlooking the mill operations. It is located at what is now 8709 Old Channel Trail.
7. This building is under construction and would later become a harness shop.
8. Steam from the lumber mill is venting straight up, providing more evidence that there is very little breeze at the time of the photo.
9. This building served as the Ferry Dowling & Co. mill office, and was constructed in the mid 1860's. A part of this building also served as the S. H. Lasley general store at the time of this photo.
10. This man is posing like he owns the place....because he does. This is George Dowling clad in a light colored, knee length jacket holding his hat in his hand.
11. This worker standing on the barge casts a shadow that provides evidence that the day was clear and sunny. The orientation of the shadow indicates that the photo was taken in the late morning to high noon time frame.
12. The unspoiled reflection of the scow Milton signifies a very calm, windless moment when the photo was taken.

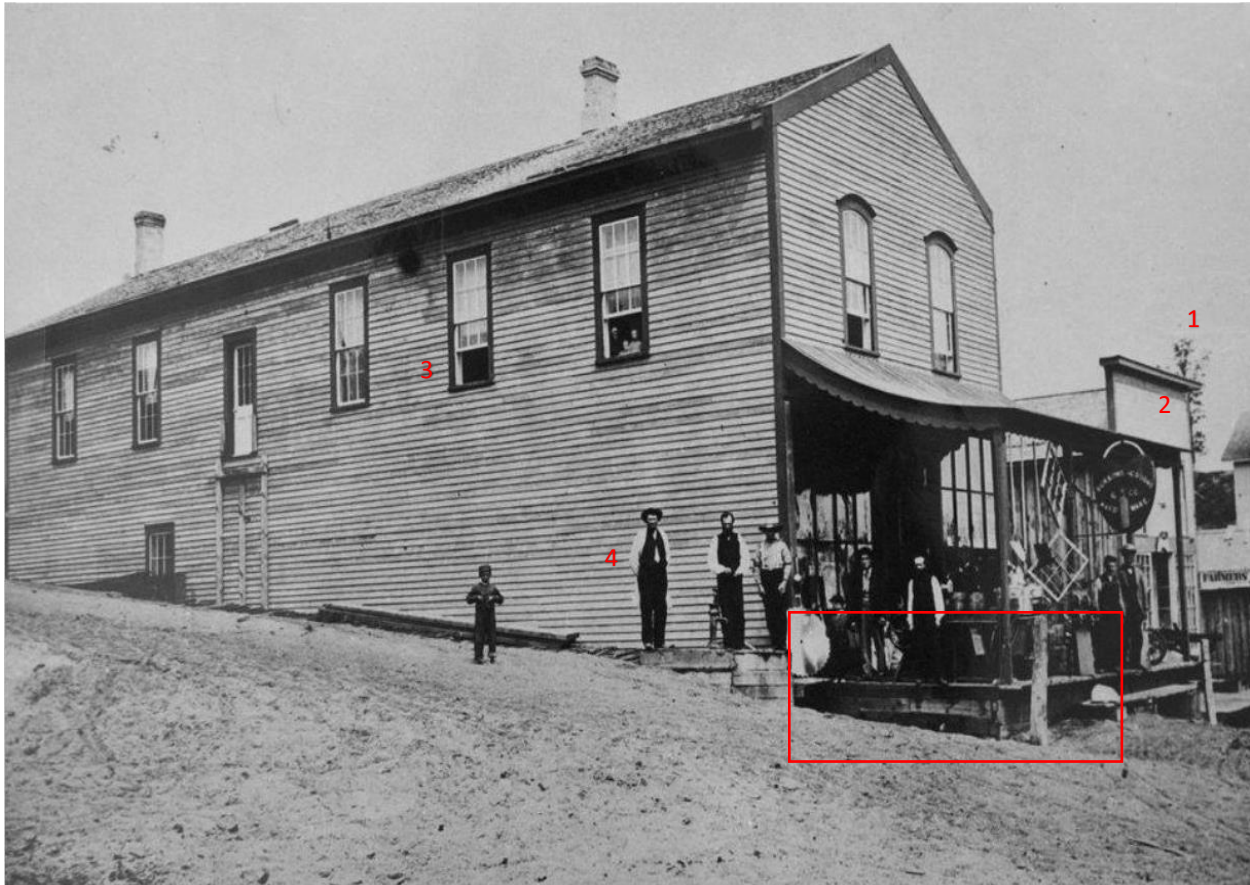


Image 2. Burrows Goodno & Co. Hardware

This photograph shows the Burrows Goodno & Co. Hardware at the Northwest corner of the intersection of Bridge (Dowling) and Ferry Street. It is estimated that the photo was taken in 1870, which is probably accurate since the building was destroyed by fire in 1871.

1. The leaves on the tree indicate that this photo was taken after the early May time period.
2. The shadow on the building awning indicates that this photo was taken during the mid to late morning time frame.
3. The windows are open which could indicate that efforts are being made to air out the upper level of the building, and that the temperature was at a comfortable level.
4. This is George Dowling in his light colored, knee length jacket with his hat on his head, centrally located in the photo. The Reverend William Montague Ferry loaned money to E. R. Burrows for establishment of this business, most likely through Ferry Dowling & Co., and perhaps that is why George is in this photo representing the company.
5. The area in the red circle is the southeast corner of the front porch and provides evidence that the photo date of 1870 is accurate. (see below)

Additional evidence that the photo year is accurate can be found in the photo below of the Montague House. The Montague House was built by Ferry Dowling & Co. and opened for business in February 1871. The building was sold in the Fall of 1871 and was destroyed by fire on February 21, 1873, almost exactly 2 years to the day from when it opened.

The area enclosed in red below shows the Southeast corner of the Burrows Goodno & Co. hardware front porch. Compared to the area enclosed in red in the photo above it is evident that additional fill has been brought in to reduce the drop off from the porch which has been extended

approximately 2 feet. One can conclude that the rare photo below was taken in 1871 during the short time period that the Montague House and the hardware were both in existence.



Image 3. The Montague House

Taking a closer look one can see an individual to the left of the middle support pillar wearing a light colored, knee length jacket. One hundred percent certainty is not possible, but this is probably George Dowling standing front and center of a Ferry Dowling & Co. creation.



Image 4. George Dowling?



Image 5. Ferry Dowling & Co. Boarding House

This is a photo of the Ferry Dowling & Co. boarding house located on the high bluff at the corner of Dowling street and Old Channel Trail. The front page of the February 16, 1950 issue of *The Montague Observer* identified this photo as how the boarding house appeared in 1857. It is highly improbable that the boarding house existed in 1857 since Montague had not been surveyed yet, and Ferry Dowling & Co had not come into existence until the mid-1860's.

The photo shows evidence of much foot traffic as two distinct trails are apparent. It is probable that many, if not all of those individuals staying at the boarding house worked in one of the mills or businesses located below the bluff along White Lake. Names of individuals residing at the boarding house in 1870 included George Dowling, Henry Dowling, Henry Lasley, S. S. Parks, Frank H. White, and Levi Dicey.

The particular day that this photo was taken has the appearance of a fine spring day when the temperature reached a point where windows could be opened and rooms allowed to air out. The boarding house ceased operations in 1875 and was torn down in June 1911 after falling into disrepair.

1. This dwelling is located at 8679 Meade Street.
2. Smoke can be seen wafting through the air indicating that a breeze is present out of the Southwest. This smoke is the same smoke noted under Image 1, item 2.
3. The shadow from the chimney indicates that it was a sunny day when this photo was taken. The shadow position also indicates that the photo was taken about mid-afternoon.

4. These three ladies appear to be employees of the boarding house and give evidence that this photo was a planned event. They may have become excited at the prospect of being photographed as it appears they have knocked the door off of its hinges. From this spot they would have experienced a wonderful vista of Montague, Whitehall, and the waterfront in between.
5. This appears to be one of several maple trees that was planted for landscaping purposes. It is leafed out and indicates that the photo was taken some time near early to mid-May.
6. This is 21-year old Annie Wilson. The apron she is wearing gives the appearance that she was an employee of the boarding house. It is unknown why she was placed front and center for this photo while the other employees were relegated to the deck above the door. Perhaps the owner of the boarding house had a particular fondness for her, and perhaps she was unaware that in five years she would be his wife.
7. This is believed to be Joseph Heald, a prominent lumberman in the area, holding his hat in his hand since he was in the presence of a lady.
8. This is George Dowling clad in his light colored, knee length jacket, holding his hat in his hand since he was in the presence of a lady. He is prominently sitting on a stump as if he owns the place....which he does, and appears to be looking out toward the mill that partially bears his name.
9. These two men have been identified as workers from the mill. It is unclear what their purpose is in this photo. Perhaps they were boarders and served as an example of type of people that stayed at the boarding house.
10. This is smoke wafting through the air created by the clearing activity taking place at the spot where George Dowling built his house, as noted under Image 1, Item 5. A breeze out of the Southwest is carrying this smoke. This is strong evidence that this photo was taken the same day as Image, but later in the afternoon.



Image 6. Montague and Ferry Dowling & Co. Mill

This is a photo taken in 1870 that shows most of Montague and the Ferry Dowling & Co. operation. It shows the devastation that followed logging activities as well. This photo was taken from a spot across from 8581 Old Channel Trail, or what was known in 1877 as the Dewitt Clinton Bowen residence.

1. This is the site where the Montague House was built in 1871. It is obvious that it has not been built but could very well be under construction with foundation work.
2. This is the Ferry Dowling & Co. office and S. Henry Lasley general store referenced under Image 1, Item 9.
3. This is the harness shop under construction referenced under Image 1, Item 7.
4. This is the Ferry Dowling & Co. cupola warehouse. Image 1 was photographed from the cupola of this building.
5. The steam venting from this shingle mill shows that a Southwest breeze was present when this photograph was taken.
6. This is the scow Milton making its way out into White Lake with a load of lumber. This is the same scow being loaded in Image 1. The flags atop both masts show a robust breeze coming from the Southwest.
7. This is George Dowling with his light colored, knee length jacket, holding his hat in his hand.
8. This is believed to be Joseph Heald.



Image 7. S. H. Lasley general store

This building was one of the earliest buildings constructed in Montague by Ferry Dowling & Co., serving as their mill office as well as the S.H. Lasley general store. It was located on the Southeast corner of the intersection of Bridge (Dowling) and Ferry streets.

1. This is the Ferry Dowling & Co. cupola warehouse. It shows the window in the cupola which is the spot from which Image 1 was taken.
2. This person has been identified as George Dowling, wearing his light colored, knee length jacket, and holding his hat in his hand since he was in the presence of a lady. He is also posing as he did in Image 1 by placing his left foot upon an elevated surface.
3. This person has been identified as Annie Wilson.
4. This person has been identified as S.H. Lasley.
5. This shadow is cast by the Post Office/Insurance building that was directly across the street to the west at the time of the photo. This shadow indicates that the photo was taken in mid to late afternoon.

Conclusion/Speculation

No evidence has been found that identifies the photographer who took the above photos. The *Directory of Early Michigan Photographers* by David V. Tinder mentions a photographer in Whitehall, circa 1870, by the name of Norman and Austin. It is probable that one of the names of that business was Frederick Norman. Frederick Norman attended business school in Chicago after the civil war ended but spent time studying art with local painters, one of which was Joseph Warner. Joseph Warner showed Frederick how to use a camera, and with that knowledge Frederick came to Whitehall in 1868 and worked as a photographer.

It is uncertain who was the other name in the business. The maiden name of Frederick's wife in 1870 was Austin, but it is unknown if she was the other individual noted in the "*Directory*." No other photographers were identified in the Whitehall/Montague area circa 1870.

The "*Directory*" mentions that "Norman & Austin produced a *carte de visite* of a group of two-story frame buildings which included a drug store, a hardware shop and a store offering groceries and provisions. A *carte de visite* was a small portrait glued to a card measuring 4 inches high by 2 1/2 inches wide. It was made with a four-lens camera with a sliding plate holder (which permitted eight exposures to be taken on one plate), and was printed from wet collodion negatives on albumen paper. With the production of a negative, it was possible to make multiple copies of each image.

The subject matter of the photographs analyzed in this document would support the statement in the "*Directory*" that Norman and Austin produced images of two-story frame buildings which included a drug store, a hardware shop and a store offering groceries and provisions, but it is uncertain if the subject photographs were *carte de visite* type.

The photographs provide information that has led the author to speculate that Images 1, 2, 5, 6, and 7 were all taken on the same day. All of these images have one thing in common...George Dowling.

George Dowling was a partner in the Ferry Dowling & Co. enterprise and had been deeply involved in the birth and growth of Montague, Michigan. The lumber mill he operated provided employment for a number of men in the area. The boarding house constructed by his company provided living quarters for these same men. The general store building constructed by his company provided goods that helped all of the inhabitants of the area survive. The hardware store, to which his company lent money for construction, provided important items for local residents. It is probable that George had a great deal of pride for the development of the area since he served as the catalyst for a good portion of that development.

It is the belief of the author that George had a desire to document the growth of Montague but found that written documents could not convey what the photograph could, therefore he hired a photographer to take photographs of important areas of the infant town. He may have decided that the important areas were those in which he had a personal/business interest, or those which served as a social hub. A successful business man, George was financially able to afford the cost of the photographs which resulted in several photos that have survived for 150+ years.