

Antigo's first train depot was built in 1882. The railroad helped establish Antigo, which became headquarters of the northern division of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad.

Joe Hermolin Langlade County Historical Society

#### Acknowledgements

Unless otherwise stated old photographs are from the archives of the Langlade County Historical Society. Current photographs are by the author.

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Looking north west from the court house roof. In the foreground in Second Ave., beyond that lie some of the rail yards of the C&NW Railroad, including the roundhouse.

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## Preface

This booklet was inspired by a bicycle tour for visitors to Antigo. As non-residents, they were interested in how Antigo developed, and landmarks observable today that might encapsulate the city's history. Not all events in a city's history are represented by landmarks and some important sites have been lost. So this booklet cannot substitute as a history of Antigo, only glimpses of the structures still standing and a reminder of the origins and growth of Antigo.

The sites are grouped by location rather than in a chronological order or by category. A map, which is included, should help visitors find their way.



The Kingsbury and Henshaw Mill was one of several in Antigo in the late 19th and early 20th century. It was lumber that first attracted settlers to the area. Kingsbury's son, A.J., became a well-known photographer whose work has documented much of the life of Northern Wisconsin and the U.P. of Michigan.

## Introduction

The area where Antigo developed was left flat by the retreating glaciers of the most recent ice age over 12,000 years ago. The soil left behind, Antigo silt loam, was rich and has become the state soil of Wisconsin.

When white settlers established homes in this area in the decades after the Civil War, there were Ojibwa (Chippewa) and Menominee Indians here. Dense forests of hardwood and pine first attracted these settlers. Francis Deleglise, a timber cruiser, speculated in real estate and platted the city. He originally called the settlement Springbrook, but it was changed to Antigo after the Chippewa phrase "Nequi-Antigo-Seebeh" which meant "where the stream runs past evergreen balsam."

The Deleglise cabin, Antigo's first building, was built in 1879; the same year that New County was created out of part of Marathon County (It was later renamed Langlade). Census data indicate a county population of 685. Borders were disputed and revised but finalized by the early 1880's. Most political power lay in the lumber towns along the Wolf River, but an election in 1881 resulted in Antigo's becoming the county seat. A courthouse and jail were constructed on the site of the current courthouse.

By 1886 Antigo had grown from a population of a few dozen to 2,500; and by 1893 the population had reached 5,000. It was incorporated as a city in 1885.

A major reason for Antigo's growth was the railroad then expanding into Northern Wisconsin. Deleglise convinced the Milwaukee, Lake Shore and Western (MLS&W) to come through Antigo with gifts of land and rights of way. The first train pulled into the Antigo depot in 1880. The MLS&W was taken over by the Chicago & Northwestern (C&NW) in 1892.

In 1907 Antigo became division headquarters of the Ashland division of the C&NW. The railroad continued to be a major part of the community's growth for the next 50 years. It is estimated that in the 1940's about 40 percent of the workforce in Antigo was somehow connected to the railroad.

Other major industries in Antigo's early years included several lumber and feed mills; many situated along the shores of Kellogg's Pond (now Antigo Lake). In 1922 the Kraft Cheese Company was looking to expand beyond its plant in Northern Illinois and chose Antigo as the site of its second plant. It became a major employer in Antigo as well as a buyer for the many dairy farms in the area.

Many improvements in Antigo's infrastructure occurred during the depression when various New Deal projects provided employment, established the water treatment plant, bridges across Springbrook, and the shored up the banks of Springbrook.

## <u>The Deleglise Cabin</u> Langlade County Historical Museum grounds 404 Superior Street



The Deleglise log cabin is the first building erected in what was to become Antigo. After having fought in the Civil War, Francis Deleglise worked as a timber cruiser in North Central Wisconsin. He saw potential in this area and bought a large tract of land. Together with his son-in-law John Deresch and family friend George Ekhart, he built this cabin in 1878 on the banks of Springbrook. In 1879 he brought his wife and six children to their new home. Their five-day trip from Appleton was well documented by two daughters.

In 1916 the cabin was moved down Superior Street to the Library (now Museum) in one of Wisconsin's earliest attempts to preserve part of its history.

# Carnegie Library 404 Superior Street



This building was erected in 1903-1905 as a public library and was funded by a grant from Andrew Carnegie. It is grander and more costly than many of the 1,679 Carnegie Libraries funded throughout the country; 63 in Wisconsin alone. It is also one of the few that is still more or less intact. The building is also important in that it was designed by a prominent Wisconsin architect, Alan Conover, the first professor of civil engineering at the UW-Madison.

Today it serves a museum operated by the Langlade County Historical Society.



Library Interior

## Langlade County Teachers College

411 Superior Street



The Langlade County Teacher Training School was formed in 1906 and used the second floor of the Carnegie Library for classrooms. The Normal School offered two years of college level courses in education. By 1925 the need for space became limited and a separate building was planned.

A two-story Normal School was planned for the flat-iron lot across from the library. Designed by Parkinson and Dockendorf of LaCrosse, it was made of Bedford stone and included a gymnasium with a spectator balcony, an auditorium, and classrooms. Final building costs were \$53,440. It was completed in time for classes in August 1926 and continued being used through 1971.

Today the building serves as a Community Center and houses the Langlade County Department on Aging.

## Hanousek House

405 Clermont Street



Photo courtesy of Joan Braun

John Hanousek, Sr. moved to Antigo from the U.P. of Michigan in the late 19th century where he was already a wealthy man due to his mining interests. He was very much involved in Antigo's development. In 1917 with the U.S. entering World War I, he bought the Opera House, donated it to the city, and converted it into an armory. At his death in 1930, his will, filed in probate, was the largest to

that date in Langlade County.

His home on Clermont and Seventh, built in 1906, is virtually unchanged in its exterior.

John Hanousek, Sr.



#### **Sears Roebuck Kit House**

810 Seventh Avenue



From the late 1800's to the 1940's, several companies sold kits for homes. The most prominent was Sears Roebuck. They sold kits for sheds and cottages up to small apartment buildings and a wide range of single-family homes in various architectural styles and price ranges. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the workmanship and components may have been better than that available in many towns. Parts would come by rail in an orderly sequence with exterior structural parts preceding interior trim and fixtures.

This house was one of their top models as described in their 1926 catalog. Basic cost was \$3,278. Extras such as storm windows and doors an additional \$116, sheet plaster instead of lathe an additional \$306, and screen doors and windows \$78. A variety of plumbing and lighting choices at various prices were also available.

#### U.S. Post Office 501 Clermont Street



Antigo's first post office was established in 1879 in the log cabin store of Neils Anderson, one of the first buildings in Antigo. The post office moved into a series of retail businesses and office buildings over the next three decades as Antigo grew.

The current Post Office is on land purchased in 1911 from the Antigo Canning Co. for \$8,250. In 1915 this building was erected at a cost of \$60,000 by a Minnesota construction company. It

is one of 27 post offices in Wisconsin to be placed on the National Registry of Historic Places and looks virtually the same now as when it was built.

Joe Rath delivers the mail on skis. Photo by A. J. Kingsbury for the <u>Milwaukee Journal</u>



## **The Railroad Depot**

Edison Street and Sixth Avenue



When rail line expansion was planned in the 1870's by the Milwaukee, Lakeshore and Western Railway, Antigo was bypassed. Francis Deleglise induced the railroad to alter the route. When the first train arrived in 1880, the crew was greeted with sandwiches and lemonade (Antigo prided itself on its temperance). In the next decades the Chicago & Northwestern took over the MLS&W line and erected several buildings including a passenger depot, warehouses, a pump house, icehouse, a blacksmith shop, carpentry shop, and roundhouse. By the 1940's the railroad was Antigo's largest employer, but its importance declined in the 1950's.

The last remaining building, actually three separate structures, was redeveloped in the 1990's by the Alexander Company of Madison as a mix of residential and business use. The basic structure is a reminder of Antigo's past and its importance in the age of rail travel.

# The Opera House

1016 Fifth Avenue



Built in 1904, this was the second venue in Antigo for public entertainment. It was organized by investors and managed by John Hanus. During World War I, it served as an armory. The building hosted a variety of shows including agricultural exhibits, minstrel and magic shows, traveling theater troupes, silent films, and an annual auto exhibit. The building had a seating capacity of 1,100, with a stage that could accommodate 50 people together with two railcar loads of scenery. The seats could be removed to make room for a dance floor with the orchestra on stage. For a time the basement had a bowling alley and billiard parlor.

Today the building contains apartments.

Antigo High School Prom 1911 in the Opera House



## **The Antigo Daily Journal**

612 Superior Street



Antigo is a fortunate, rare city in Wisconsin today that still has one of the few remaining familyowned daily newspapers. Coverage of local news and events is important in the development of a community and the <u>Antigo Daily Journal</u> has provided that coverage for over 100 years.

Antigo's first newspaper, the <u>New County</u> <u>Republican</u>, was a weekly newspaper first printed in 1880. From 1880 to 1919 several weekly newspapers were published at various times including two in German.

Brothers Fred and Henry Berner came to Antigo in the 1890's and purchased the <u>Antigo Journal</u>, a three-year-old weekly. Four years later, on September 18, 1905, they published the first edition as a daily. The newspaper continues to be owned by the Berner family.

#### The Court House 800 Clermont Street

In the 1870's and 1880's, political power rested in Shawano and lumbering towns along the Wolf River. Efforts by Francis Deleglise and others led to a shift in political power to Antigo. In 1879 the County of New was created and later renamed Langlade in honor of Charles de Langlade who fought in the French Indian Wars. Antigo became the county seat. It took several years to define the boundaries of the county and its neighbors.

This is Antigo's second courthouse and was erected in 1905 at a cost of \$71,080. It was built by a Minneapolis company that used primarily Port Wing brown stone. Interior murals were designed by A. E. Soderberg of LaCrosse who had worked on the 1893 Exposition in Chicago and the Swedish king's summer palace in Uppsala.

The exterior and interior have recently undergone extensive restoration.

#### **Daskam House (Hospital)**

630 First Avenue



This mansion was built by Edward Daskam, a grandson of a Revolutionary War soldier and himself a Civil War veteran. He came to Antigo in 1881 and invested in real estate and other businesses. This two-story brick home was built in 1897 at a cost of about \$5,000. It served as his office, the family home, as well as the site of many elegant dance parties.

In 1911 the family moved back to Michigan and the home was purchased by Dr. E.J. Donahue who converted into a hospital (Antigo's second). Doctors M. J. and E. J. Donahue and their two sisters operated the hospital for over 20 years. In 1933, with the opening of Langlade Memorial Hospital, the building ceased operating as a hospital.

In 1935 it was converted into apartments.

#### Water Treatment Plant

First Avenue at Fulton Street



During the 1930's America suffered a "Great Depression" that left one worker in four unemployed. Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected president in 1932 with the promise of a "New Deal." One of his programs, the Public Works Administration (PWA), was created in 1933 and was designed to promote recovery with federally-funded construction projects. Countrywide this program spent \$6 billion and employed 650,000 workers.

The water plant, built in 1938, was the largest construction project undertaken in Antigo up to that time. It cost \$177,000 and the federal PWA program funded 49 percent of its cost. The art deco style façade is a typical architectural feature of the times.

## **County Fairgrounds**

Superior Street/ Neva Road



Langlade's first county fair took place in 1886 at the original Opera House. It was organized by the Langlade County Agricultural Society. Its instant success prompted county officials to purchase 40 acres of land (at a cost of \$1,500) and erect an exhibition building for agricultural exhibits (at a cost of \$1,300).

In 1912 fairground officials paid a pilot \$1,000 to fly over of the grandstand; 10,000 people came to witness the event and get a close look at the machine.



The fair attracted as many as 12,000 people in one day. Popular events at the fairgrounds, in addition to agricultural exhibits, included horse races.

## **Springbrook School**

At the County Fairgrounds



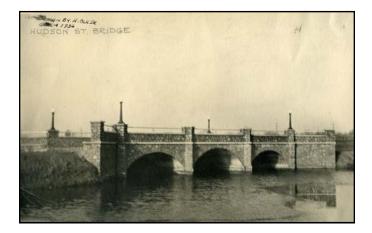
This schoolhouse was the former Springbrook School located about 9 miles northeast of Antigo. It was built in 1905 at a cost of \$800 and situated on an acre of land purchased for \$20. About 40 pupils attended that first year. The school continued to operate until 1962, and in 1963 was moved to the fairgrounds. Today it serves as a memorial to the many one-room schoolhouses that were scattered throughout the county so that, prior to busing, it was possible for students to walk to school.



Early 20th century classroom

## Hudson Street Bridge

600-700 block of Hudson Street



Soon after he took office as president in 1933, Franklin Roosevelt instituted many programs designed to provide work for the unemployed and to benefit communities around the country.

Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) funds were used by Antigo to build several bridges across Springbrook. In 1934 ten new bridges were planned and many completed. The most beautiful of these is generally acknowledged to be the one spanning Hudson Street. It was designed by city engineer Henry Olk who also did many of the other bridges and the water treatment plant (see page 16).

Another New Deal program, the Public Works Administration (PWA) would later fund work to stabilize the shorelines of Springbrook.

## Kellogg's Pond (Antigo Lake)



Timber first attracted Francis Deleglise to this area in 1879. That same year he convinced the Novotny brothers to move here from Wausau and erect a sawmill on the banks of Springbrook. They built a dam generating a pond. In 1883 T. D. Kellogg moved to Antigo from Lily and bought out the Novotny brothers. The pond became known as Kellogg's Pond. The mill was one of many lumber and grain mills that became major industries in Antigo's early years. Antigo Lake became the source for ice for the Chicago Northwestern Railway icehouse until well into the 1950's.



Kingsbury & Henshaw Mill at Kellogg's Pond (St. John's Church is in the background)

## **Neff Roberts Building**

622 Fifth Avenue



Recently remodeled, this building has many original characteristics of when it was erected in 1913.

Edgar Neff, one of the developers, came to the area in the early 1880's from Green Bay. He farmed near Bryant then moved to Antigo and was the town's first blacksmith. From 1884 to 1886 he operated a sawmill northeast of town and installed a rail spur line to connect to the main C&NW line. "Neff Switch" became the name of the local school district and is remembered in Neff Switch Road in the area of the saw mill.

After fire destroyed the mill in 1886, Neff returned to Antigo, worked as a blacksmith, and invested in real estate including homes and retail buildings. At his death in 1921 he was one of Antigo's major real estate investors.

## Healy House 322 and 336 Fifth Avenue



Kellogg's Pond was an ice source before mechanized refrigeration. Homes and the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad used ice harvested by R. Healy, Sr. Antigo's largest operator, who lived at 322 Fifth Ave. He began his business in 1897. His son, Michael, at 336 Fifth Ave. worked with him.

Two icehouses stood nearby. In 1932 they stored 7,000 tons of ice. Another 3,500 tons were sent to the C&NW rail yards to be used in refrigerator cars. Other shipments went as far as Watersmeet Michigan .

In an agricultural area, the Healy Ice Company was a major wintertime employer, hiring 44 men in 1932.



Harvesting ice on Kellogg's Pond

## Antigo Brewery (Kraft Cheese Company.)

201 Morse Street



Although Francis Deleglise tried to keep the city "dry," in 1896 the Antigo Brewery was organized. It continued to operate until prohibition, and then switched to near beer before closing.

In 1922 the Kraft Cheese Company took over the facilities when it expanded beyond Northern Illinois. Until that time the market for farmers' milk consisted primarily of as many as 35 small, local corner cheese stores and creameries. Kraft had a major impact on the community of dairy farmers and city employees for over 70 years. When Philip Morris, which had purchased Kraft, announced the closing of the factory in 1993, the employees purchased the facility and continued to operate a successful cheese manufacturing plant.

It is now Sartori Cheese.

### **Gordon-Van Tine Kit Home**

202 South Superior Street



This one and one-half story Tudor style home was built for Tony and Gertrude Walk in the late 1930's or early 1940's. It is another example of a mail order home built from a kit of which there are several in Antigo (see page 9).

This one, listed in the Gordon-Van Tine catalog of 1936, was called The Bristol. The Gordon-Van Tine Company of Iowa, established in 1865 as a building material factory, began selling mail order homes throughout the U.S. in the early 1900's.

This model was described in the catalog as a "delightful brick bungalow [that] will please the most critical American family" and "beautiful in its general effect and thoroughly modern in detail." It is of frame construction and sheathed with a stone veneer.

## <u>Antigo Hospital</u>

1404 Fifth Avenue



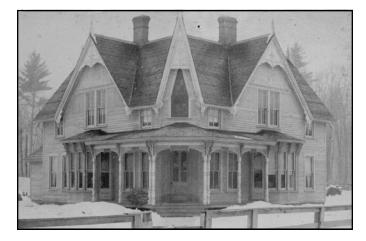
Antigo's first hospital was organized by Dr. I. D. Steffen in 1889. In 1897 he located to a new building at Elm Street and Fifth Avenue where he ran the Antigo Hospital. The hospital accommodated 24 patients at one time.

In 1918 it was taken over by Dr. G. W. Moore who had been practicing in Antigo since graduating from medical school in 1905. He was president of the Langlade County Medical Society and city health commissioner. In 1922 Dr. G. W. Moore left Antigo and the hospital was run by his nephew Dr. G. E. Moore. This hospital continued, together with the one at Superior Street and First Avenue (see page 15), until Langlade Memorial Hospital was established in 1933.

The building has been modified but is still recognizable.

## **Thomas Lynch Home**

602 Lincoln Avenue



When Antigo was incorporated as a city in 1885, Thomas W. Lynch, a lawyer and two-year resident of Antigo, was elected its first mayor. The first ordinance passed in his two-year administration prescribed the width of the board sidewalks. During Lynch's administration ordinances were passed that established a functioning city. Monies for street improvements and purchase of for a volunteer fire department with new fire fighting equipment were raised in this administration.

Lynch went on to serve a second term in 1888-1889. This was less momentous than his first term that developed the city; however, saloon licenses were granted for the first time.

Today the building houses the Langlade Abstract & Title Co.

## <u>Max Hoffman House</u>

1503 Clermont Street



Max Hoffman was born in Germany in 1867 and immigrated to Appleton with his family when he was 2. He went to law school, working his way through college and at one point, working as a police officer at the Chicago World's Fair. In 1894 after graduation, he came to Antigo where he entered into a partnership with George Latta. He served variously as city attorney, district attorney, and school board member. He planned this large home situated on 3 acres of land but died of tuberculosis before his family could move in.

His widow raised their three children by renting rooms and serving meals to out-of-town school teachers. The large lot was able to support a cow, some chickens, and a vegetable garden for the family, as well as a large ginseng garden planted by Max before his death.

### Trevor House 1018 Clermont Street



John Henry White Trevor was born in 1860 in England and came to Wisconsin with his family in 1870. In 1883 J. H. Trevor came to Antigo to work with George Latta, Antigo's first attorney. Shortly thereafter he opened his own law practice. He served as county district attorney in 1885-1886.

J. H. Trevor had many business interests. Among them was the establishment in 1888, with two partners, of the Antigo Edison Electric Light Company, which was Antigo's first utility.

The deed for this house was executed in 1887 and it is believed to have been built the following year. It was originally planned to house a family spanning three generations but has since been converted into two apartments.



## Grabowsky Home

926 Hogan Street



Ed Grabowsky, once a member of the Kaiser's Palace Guard in Germany, and his wife Laura came to Antigo in 1886. He described Antigo as a land of trees and stumps with a few frame buildings.

He began a brickyard, having learned the trade from his father in Germany. The high-clay content of the soil proved ideal for high-quality bricks. Business expanded with a new, larger location in the Town of Ackley. Other brickyards in the area included two by Grabowsky's relatives, but Ed Grabowsky's was the largest. In the 1920's it had an annual production of 500,000 bricks with about half used locally and half sold statewide. Further expansion plans were affected by the depression, and operation ceased in the late 1930's.

The original home, at this site, was partially destroyed in a tornado in 1898 and rebuilt. The home is still in the family and its exterior is the same as when it was rebuilt. Of the many Antigo buildings using Grabowsky bricks are the three others at the Hogan Street and First Avenue intersection that were built for other family members.



### Hammond House

723 First Avenue



The lot containing this house was recorded in Antigo's first plat book in 1888. This house is believed to have been built in 1898 by P. Hanson and taken over by G. Hammond and, a year later, by his son Walter.

G. Hammond was valedictorian of the first graduating class at Lawrence University in 1860. Walter also graduated from Lawrence University and lived in Chicago before he and his wife Sarah moved to Antigo. Walter began buying timberland. It is estimated that he bought and sold 500,000 acres in Langlade, Shawano, and Oconto counties.

When Sarah died in 1921, Walter and his two daughters moved back to Chicago. He donated land in Ainsworth on Mosquito Lake to the Boy Scouts in what became Camp Makajawan.

## **Leland Tollefson House**

624 Badger Avenue



Leland Tollefson was a young man living in this house when he enlisted in the 107th Trench Mortar Battery Co. in World War I. This company of 200 from the Antigo area trained here, then in Camp Douglas, and then in Waco, Texas. They sailed for France in early 1918 and fought along side the French in the Alsace region. On August 17 Corp. Leland Tollefson was killed in action. Today he is memorialized by the Antigo Veterans' Foreign Wars hall being named for him.



The 107th TMB Co. being seen off at the Antigo depot.

## **Morse House**

600 First Avenue



This house was constructed in about 1904 for Elmer Addison Morse and his wife Myra. In the early 1900's he was the first Antigo man to be elected to the Congress, as a Republican.

He was one of the so-called "Insurgents" who along with Democrats in 1913 challenged the authoritarian rule of Speaker Joseph Cannon. This revolt, engineered primarily by congressmen from the Midwest led to a resolution, introduced by Morse, revising how committee positions and chairmen were assigned. He was also an early advocate of environment conservation legislation.

Morse served two terms in Congress (1907-1913) and later remained active in Republican Party politics in Langlade County.

#### John Ogden House

502 Virginia Street



John Ogden's great grandfather from New York State fought in the Revolutionary War. His granduncle William moved to Chicago and helped found the Chicago & NorthWestern Railroad. His grandfather settled in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1848 and his father settled in Plover.

John Ogden was born in 1851 in Portage County. The family moved to Waupaca where he learned his trade as a printer and studied law. In 1873 he was admitted to the bar. In 1878 he started the <u>Taylor County News</u> in Medford. In 1886 he bought the <u>Antigo Forward</u> which he renamed <u>The</u> <u>Republican</u> and published it until 1889. It was eventually purchased by the Berner Bros. Publishing Co. and merged with the <u>Antigo Daily Journal</u>. He became a municipal judge in 1910 and served until his death in 1913.

#### McCarey House 116 Fifth Avenue



Bernard McCarey and his family moved to Antigo from Appleton in the late 19th century. He worked on the C&NW Railroad. The family continued living in the house after Bernard's death in the 1918 flu pandemic. One son Dr. Arthur McCarey became a prominent physician in Green Bay and a founder of the Wisconsin Medical Society.

The second owners were Morris and Susan Robinson. He was born in Wisconsin but went west and was a cowboy on cattle drives. He met Buffalo Bill Cody there. He came, with his wife, to Antigo where he also worked on the C&NW. When his first wife died, Morris remarried Sarah Upham, daughter of a prominent Shawano businessman and niece of a former Wisconsin governor.

#### Dr. Steffen's House 503 Fifth Avenue



Dr. Lyman Steffen and his family lived in this house. He was the son of Dr. I. D. Steffen who, upon graduation from Rush Medical School in Chicago in 1887, came directly to Antigo as the city's first physician.

Lyman Steffen was born in Antigo in 1887 and, like his father, also attended Rush Medical School in Chicago. He practiced in various places and in 1913 returned to Antigo, practicing with his father. During World War I he served overseas and then returned to Antigo. He died in 1940. His wife, Erma, was prominent in many civic organizations.

In 1966 the daughters of Lyman and Erma donated the home to Antigo as a meeting site for various community organizations.

## **Fifth Avenue**

Fifth Avenue, Antigo's main street, was originally the connection between the Deleglise home and the home of Willard Ackley, on the banks of the Eau Claire River near the present Riverview Golf Course. Willard Ackley was born in 1830 and arrived in this area in 1853. He was the first white settler in the county. Ackley was a trader who came from New York State. He married a Chippewa woman and his family was vital in helping the Deleglise family and others get established in the area.

When Langlade County was established in 1880 its population was only 685, with Antigo consisting of no more than a handful of families.



*Fifth Avenue in 1882, three years after the arrival of the Deleglise family to the area.* 

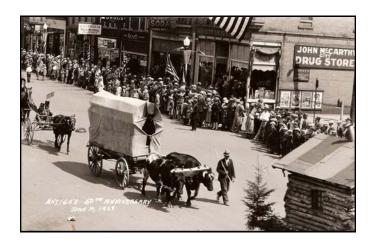
Fifth Avenue became the center of shopping, social activities, and the site of many parades.





*Top: Circus parade in 1906, Bottom: July 4th parade in 1911* 





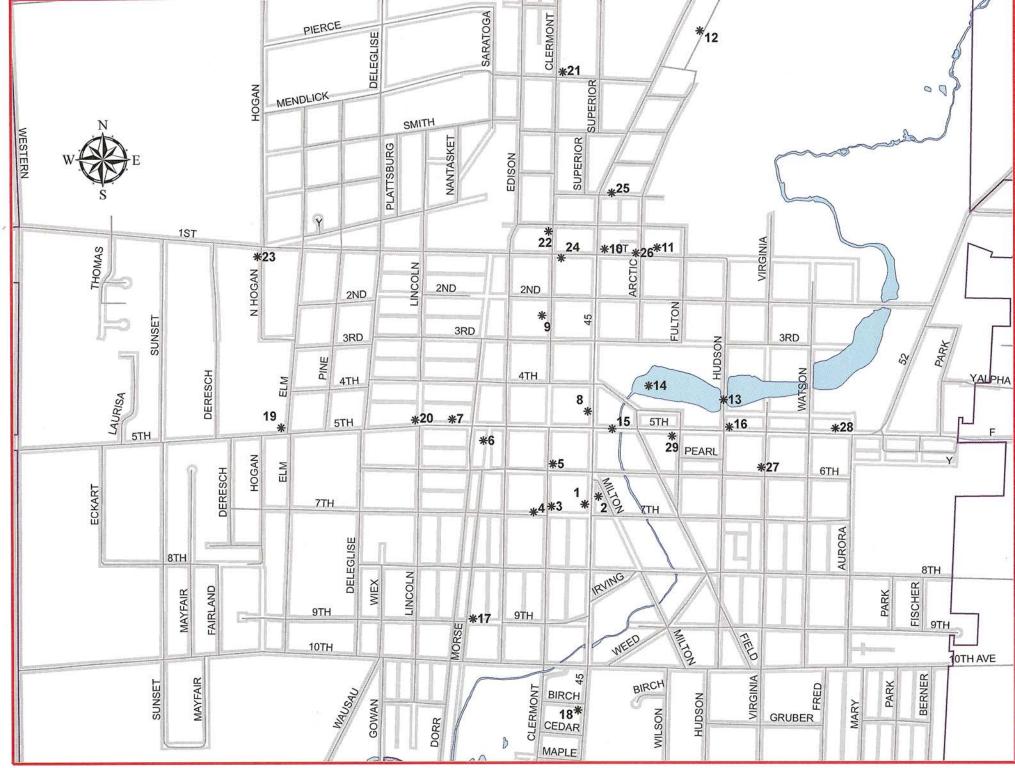


Top: Parade in 1929 commemorating 50th anniversary of the founding of Antigo. Bottom: Troop homecoming from World War I in 1919.





Top: Parade in 1954 commemorating Antigo's 75th anniversary . Bottom: Parade in 1979 commemorating Antigo's 100th anniversary.



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