

The Montello Cottonwood

From a standpoint of size alone, one of the most famous and magnificent trees in Wisconsin is the Montello or Troost cottonwood on Highway 23 at Park Street in Montello, Marquette County. A perfect, symmetrical specimen, it is one of the largest in the state.

Although cottonwoods are a fast-growing tree, this giant is probably 200 to 300 years old, which means that it was standing when the French voyageurs passed through and gave the name “Mont L’Eau” to the area. It was certainly large when the first settlers came in 1844. It grows on property owned by Mrs. Helen Troost, just a block from the downtown section.

To those who live or work near the tree, it is a thing of majestic beauty through the seasons. One of its staunchest fans was Robert L. Wright, who edited the *Marquette County Tribune* for 30 years. The tree was visible from his office window, and he grew to love it. In his own words: “If some day a summer storm brings it to earth, we who have lived with it will be poorer. For 30 years, I labored in my newspaper shop directly across the street from the Troost cottonwood and never a day went by that I did not look and admire. The tree was—and is—my friend.”

Sources: J. A. Kronschnabel, Montello
Robert Wright, Montello



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Mary Frances Schjonberg (1982)