

1996

## Bicentennial Bits [Part B]

Carol Crowe Carraco

*Western Kentucky University, carol.crowecarraco@wku.edu*

Nancy Disher Baird

*Western Kentucky University, nancy.baird@wku.edu*

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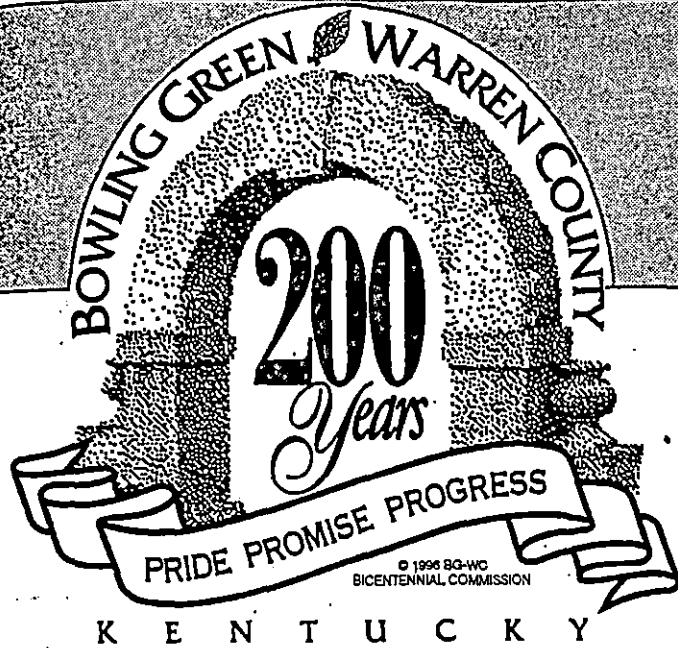
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# BICENTENNIAL BITS



Carol Crowe Carraco

Nancy Disher Baird



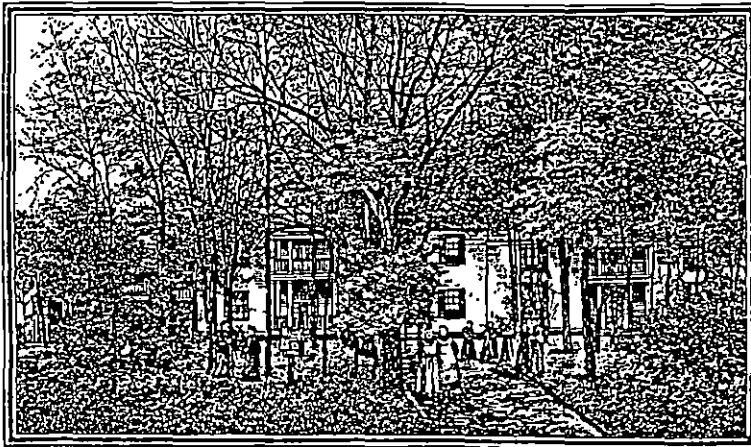
## Cedar Bluff Female College

by: Carol Crowe Carraco  
Nancy Disher Baird

Founded in 1864 by William F. Whitesides and located near Woodburn's railroad station, Cedar Bluff Female College provided a fine secondary education in a "perfect Arcadia of quiet beauty." The curriculum included English, math, a variety of natural sciences, Latin, Greek, French and German as well as elocution, piano, guitar, needlework, drawing, painting and other "ornamental branches." Tuition, room, board, and laundry cost \$60-\$80 for a five month session.

The school's brochure assured parents that the faculty protected the morals of their charges and that Cedar Bluff accepted only young ladies from good families. All students were expected to keep their rooms clean and in good order, rise at the ringing of the morning bell, retire at 10 p.m. and attend chapel every morning. Forbidden to go to parties or places of amusement or to receive the attention of young gentlemen, the women could leave the school's premises only to attend church or for "necessary" shopping--and then only accompanied by a member of the faculty.

Fire destroyed the large clapboard classroom and dormitory building in 1891 and the school moved to other quarters in Franklin. Shortly after Whiteside's death in 1893, Cedar Bluff closed.



FRONT VIEW

Illustration from the Kentucky Library, WKU

### *Capture a Moment in Time...*

With a professional portrait  
by Award-Winning Photographer  
John Payne





# Ogden College

PCN  
9/5/97

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

In 1873 Robert W. Ogden bequeathed \$50,000 to establish a school for men or women in or near Bowling Green. The will indicated that the school was to be called Ogden College if his executors organized an institution for young men. In 1877 Ogden accepted its first 100 students, offering both preparatory and college programs. It educated thousands of young men before declining enrollment, lack of accreditation, and competition with nearby Western Kentucky State Normal and Teachers College led to its merger with Western in the late 1920s. Today one of WKU's academic colleges is known as the Ogden College of Science, Technology and Health.

Ogden College offered a fairly well-rounded arts and science curriculum, and the Ogden man was taught to be "neat in appearance, gentlemanly in conduct, and above all, to stand on his feet and speak his views." In addition, Ogden College fielded a number of outstanding football teams including the 1917 team which

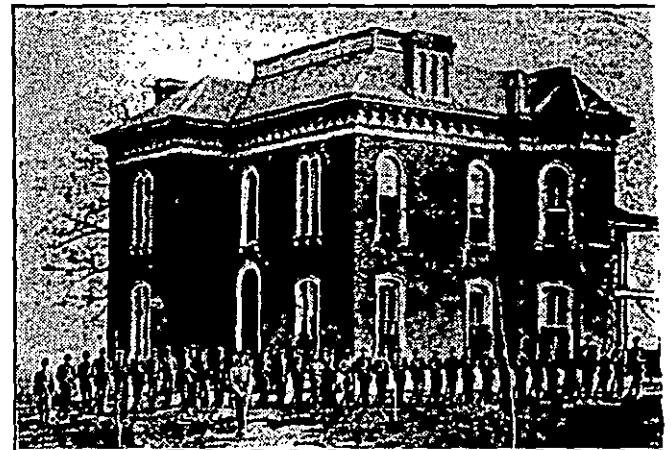


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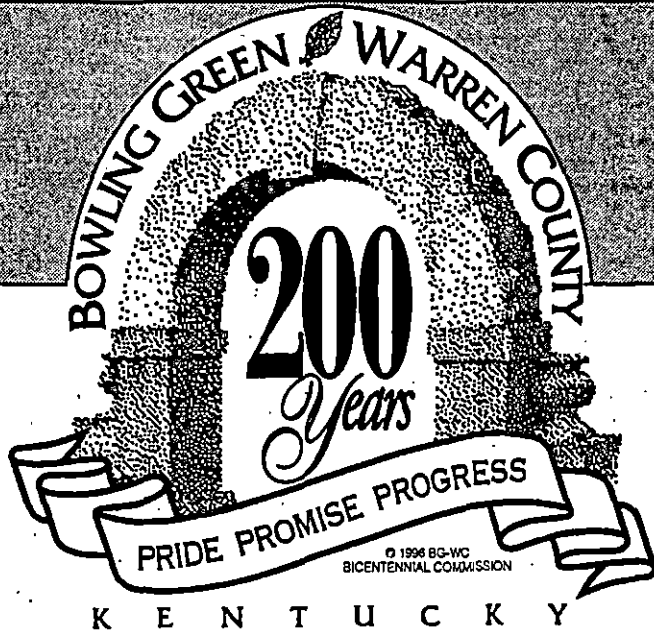
ended the season with a 65-0 victory over ar rival Bethel College of Russellville. Many Ogd alumni and their children can still recite t school yell:

*Obego! Obigo! Obego! Obigo! Bum!  
Go Get a Cat Trap Bigger Than A Rat Trap!  
Go Get a Rat Trap Bigger Than a Cat Trap  
Cannibal, Cannibal, Sis Boom Bah!  
Ogden, Ogden, Rah! Rah! Rah!*



## Building a Classic

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PCDN  
8/29/97

## Potter College

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

In the late 1880s a group of Bowling Green residents created a boarding school for young ladies on "Vinegar Hill," a cedar-covered rise on the town's southern boundary. Named for Pleasant J. Potter, who gave \$5,000 to finance the project, the school opened in September 1889. The hilltop campus consisted of a three story brick dormitory and a classroom building, a stone President's home, a tennis court and seven acres of park-like grounds.

By the turn of the century the school's enrollment included 200 local and boarding students taught by 18 instructors.

The curriculum included a wide variety of subjects as well as art, music, typing, shorthand and bookkeeping. To receive an A.M. diploma (the only degree Potter issued) one had to complete the "classical course" with an average grade of at least seventy percent.

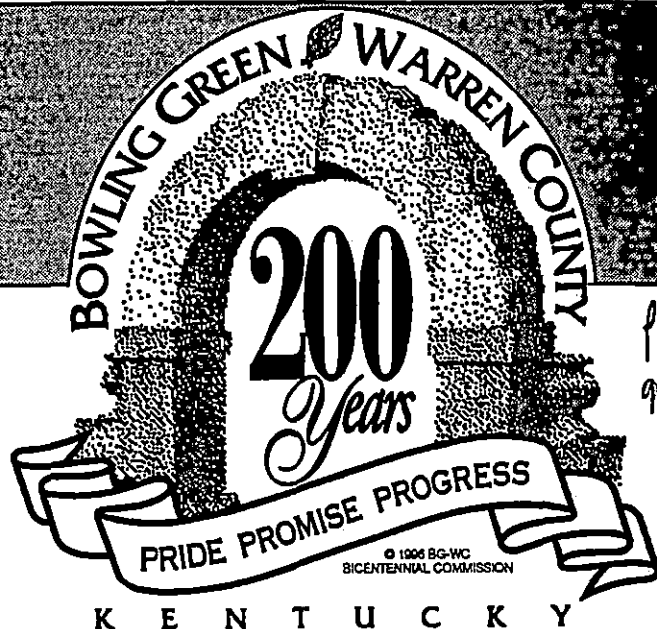
Potter College closed at the end of the 1908-09 school year. The school's trustees sold the campus to Henry Hardin Cherry who moved his Southern Normal School up the hill to a new home and renamed the school Western State Normal School. Today WKU's Cherry hall stands on the site of the old Potter classroom and dormitory structure, Gordon Wilson hall is located on the ground once occupied by the president's home and other university buildings dot the land that once was Potter College for Young Ladies.

## **The Duck Supper Scandal**

Young women who attended Potter College (1889-1909) lived under rules far more rigid than those imposed on today's students. School regulations forbid boarding students to leave the campus except when accompanied by a member of the faculty. The school's rules also forbid them to date, attend parties with, or even talk to boys.

In the spring of 1901 newspapers across the midwest reported a scandal that rocked Bowling Green and Potter College. Five young men from prominent area families, including two grandsons of Pleasant J. Potter (for whom the school was named), endeavored to take five students from the school to a late night "duck supper" at a local restaurant. As the young ladies climbed down a ladder from their second floor rooms to meet their escorts, the school's president Benjamin E. Cabell appeared with a shotgun and fired, intending to frighten the young men away. Instead of running, however, the fellows drew revolvers and returned a shot or two. Luckily no one was harmed.

Cabell sent the five women home in disgrace and filed charges against the men, and the grand jury returned indictments of attempted murder against them. However, before the case came to trial, the families of those involved convinced Governor J. C. W. Beckham to grant pardons rather than subject the young folks--and the school--to further embarrassment.



PCW  
9/2/97

## Southern Normal School and Business College

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

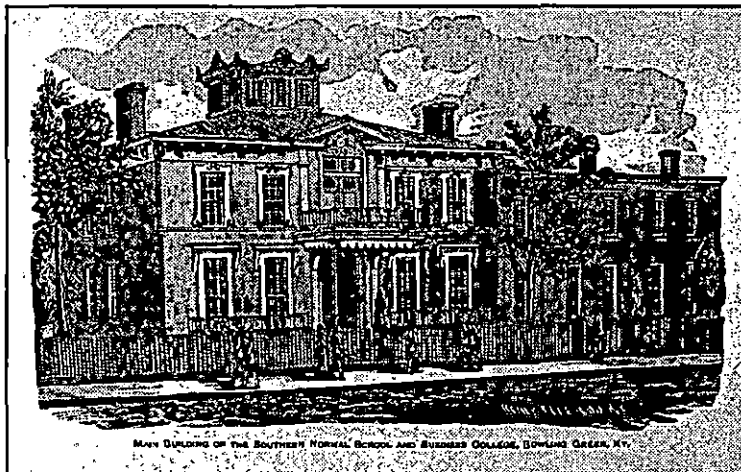


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

Founded by A. W. Mell in 1875 as the Glasgow Normal Institute, the Southern Normal School and Business College came to Bowling Green in 1884. Records of the College Street institution, located between Eleventh and Twelfth streets, reveal a faculty of twelve and a coeducational enrollment of 700 students with an average daily attendance of 400. The facility was not adequate, and each morning Professor Mell led the students and faculty to the Potter Opera House for chapel exercises.

Some of the business classes were also held in Getty Hall on the north side of the square.

When future Secretary of State Cordell Hull of Tennessee attended Southern in 1885-87, he paid \$110.50 for forty weeks of instruction and could buy his textbooks or rent them at 15% of the purchase price. By doing his own housekeeping, Hull kept total costs to \$175 per year. Although Hull did not graduate from the Warren County institution, he did fondly remember the time spent in Kentucky, recalling that his initial trip to Bowling Green was aboard the first train that he ever saw.

Only two of the Southern Normal School's courses of study, the scientific and the classic, led to the granting of bachelor's degrees. Yet in 1889 the Scientific Course graduates numbered sixteen and included four women. Their curriculum consisted of chemistry, physics, geology, botany, trigonometry, and calculus.



# State Street School

by: Carol Crowe Carraco  
Nancy Disher Baird

*pedu  
7/3/97*

Opened in January, 1883, the State Street School was Bowling Green's segregated school for area African Americans. The two story brick structure, located at the corner of State and Second streets was quite similar in architectural design and physical facilities to the College Street School. An iron fence graced the front of the building which had no indoor plumbing. Drinking water was secured from a hydrant from which dangled pint tin cups, and outdoor wooden toilets served as the 'only restrooms. C.C. Parker was the school's first principal, and he presided over the construction of an additional story which was added to the building in 1890. By 1906 the school had seven teachers and over 700 students enrolled in the institution's eight grades. One of the school's history courses was devoted to the study of Kentucky, with students being encouraged to "study local history and to visit places of historic interest in your neighborhood." In 1912 the first senior class of three young women graduated from State Street High School. As the student body grew so did the school, with the addition of a home economics building in 1924, gymnasium in 1929, and a cafeteria in 1952.

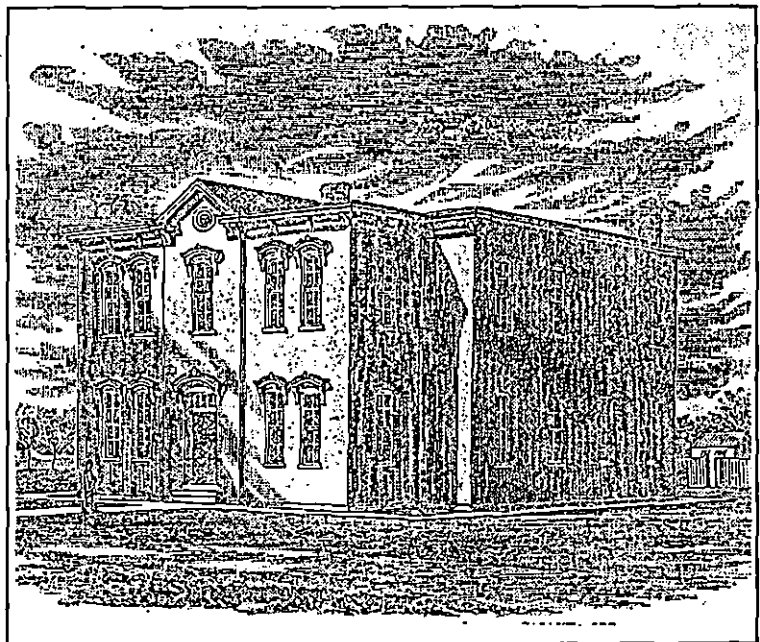


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

Noted for academics as well as athletics, area residents may well remember Coach Joe Ownby's Mustangs who won the Kentucky Negro Football Championship in 1944. In 1955 State Street High School was replaced by the more spacious High Street School which remained segregated until 1963.

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## Warren County Visitors

How have others seen us? The diaries of several 19th century travelers include comments about their visit to the area.

In the summer of 1838 a Virginian enroute to Nashville described Bowling Green as "a small but neat village" in the "midland region" of the barrens. "For me, " he wrote, "this country has no attractions. Without mountains, without valleys, without brooks, without large trees. . . a great plain with deep sink holes and shallow basins of dirty pond water and puny woods."

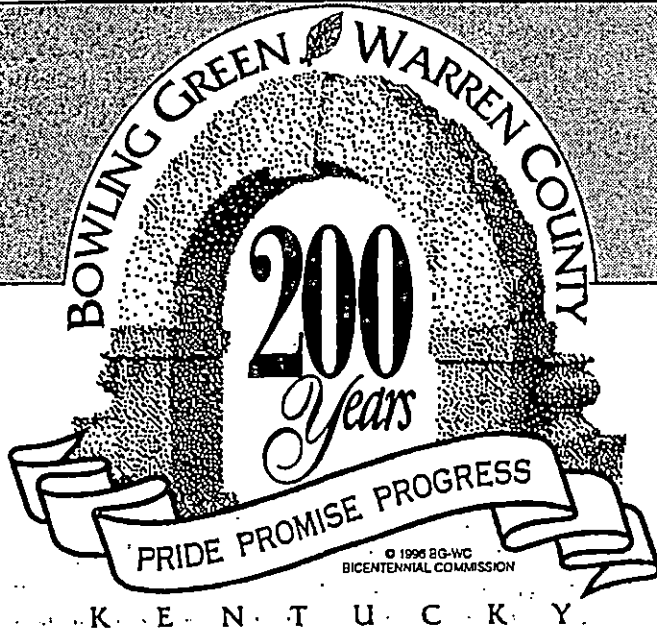
By contrast an 1879 visitor from Illinois described the area as one of considerable beauty. From Reservoir Hill (current site of the red, white and blue water tower) he gained "a most beautiful view of neat painted houses" and a "broad expanse of level, fertile country thickly dotted over with houses and groves [of trees] and marked off with white lines indicating the pike roads." He visited the old Civil War fort on top of Vinegar Hill (site of WKU's Cherry Hall) and wandered among the powder magazines and rifle pits that had been dug 18 years earlier. The profusion of cedar tree blanketing the hill "was nature's way of attempting to hide the cruel marks of war," he concluded.

## YELLOW FEVER !

Twentieth century Americans associate yellow fever with equatorial jungles in South America and Africa. But the disease was an annual killer in the American South during the 19th century and visited Bowling Green in 1878. No one knew the cause of the disease but believed that the "germs" that transmitted it could be carried by infected clothing and baggage and could spread if temperature, rotting vegetation, stagnant ponds and other environmental conditions were right.

In the summer of 1878 yellow fever appeared along the lower Mississippi River and in mid August residents of the Memphis area began an exodus to safer territory. Many of these refugees came by train to Bowling Green, where at least fifteen were treated for yellow fever; seven died. On September 9 the first of Bowling Green's thirty indigenous cases was reported, and by mid October, when the disease abated, twelve had proved fatal. All of the victims lived near the railroad station (current site of a brickyard), in a flat, filthy area called "Hell's Half Acre" because it was "the receptacle. . .of the drainage of the city." The local health officer suggested that for protection from future epidemics, sewers be constructed to carry drainage water, waste and decomposing materials away from the city--a project not undertaken, unfortunately, until the 1930s. Apparently no one noticed that mosquitoes bred in the stagnant water that characterized "Hells Half Acre."

The yellow fever virus is transmitted from person to person by the bite of the *Aedes aegyptae* mosquito, which is indigenous to Kentucky.



## Taking The Waters

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

In an age of airplanes, television sets, and computers, it is not always easy to imagine how Warren Countians relaxed some one hundred years ago. The fashionable often socialized by "taking the waters" at one of Kentucky's numerous springs. If limited by time and travel considerations, area residents could go to Massey Springs in northeastern Warren County (near Clay Lick and Glenmore and on KY Highway #185). Advertised as being where "the River Breezes Blow" and "48 miles by river and 13 miles (closer to 25) by hack from Bowling Green", the three-story, 40 room hotel provided accommodations for guests, a dining room, a dance hall, and a "duck pin alley." The owner, George F. Cole, further declared that the four springs adjoining the hotel contained "Magnesia, Iron, Sulphur, Potash, Soda, Lime, Alum and Silica, and are guaranteed to cure stomach and bowel trouble, kidney diseases, besides being very efficacious in

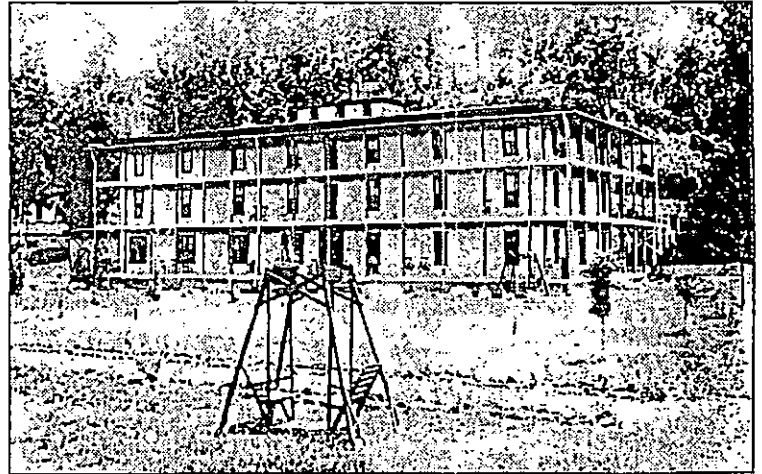


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

PCDN 5/19/97

the cure of eczema and old sores." The dining room served "chicken that you can't get anywhere else, home grown vegetables, and fish just out of the water." A four-piece African American orchestra, conducted by Henry Dial, played for nightly dances. Although no records exist of cost to guests, a nearby Allen County spa of the same era charged \$1.50 per day, \$7.50 per week, and \$25 per month. Children under twelve paid half-price. The Massey Springs Hotel closed in the late teens, became a private residence, and then burned in the early 1940s.

# Investing in Families





# Early Beech Bend

PCDN  
8/15/97

by: Nancy Disher Baird  
Carol Crowe Carraco



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

Although most Warren County residents associate Beech Bend Park with the Charlie Garvin Family, few may recall that the park's history began some 50 years before their WWII purchase of the facility. Beech Bend farm once belonged to the Walter C. Brashear family, and it was the Brashear siblings—Will, Jennie, and Dora—who first operated the park. In the 1880s the Brashears started holding public picnics under the beech trees at the bend of the Barren River north of Bowling Green. A dance pavilion was completed in 1890, and Beech Bend became a favorite place for the Fair Hops of the annual county fair. The addition of a skating rink by 1908 caused the local newspaper to refer to the park as the, "most popular resort for the society set of Bowling Green this season" and to advocate that the trolley line be extended to the, "sylvan ad picturesque" location. In 1915 the Bowling Green Messenger announced a picnic and barbecue at Beech Bend Park for Labor Day. The cost of admission was a mere, "2 jitney," or 10 cents, with varied refreshments at, "bottom prices." The clever advertisement commanded:

Come!

Put behind all care and strife,  
 Come, if married, bring your wife;  
 If single, bring your girl, of course;  
 Come by Auto, Foot or Horse,  
 Come by Aircraft, or by Boat,  
 Come by all means, for take note,  
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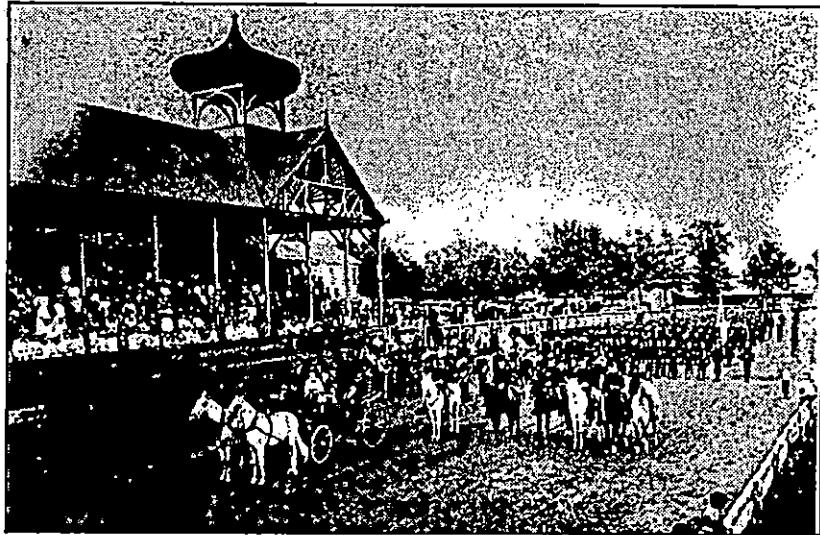
One of a series of stories sponsored by area businesses and organizations in support and celebration of our local heritage.



## Warren County Fair

PCDN  
8/7/97

"Let's go to the Fair" has been a part of Kentucky's cultural refrain since the ante bellum period, and the Warren County Fair dates to the mid-19th century. The first fairgrounds were located in the area currently bound by the By Pass and Lehman, Nutwood, Magnolia and Covington avenues. The grounds included a circular judges' stand, a half-mile race track, a grandstand that seated 3500, and an amphitheatre that held 7500. On a typical fair day some 15,000 people thronged the fairgrounds. Livestock and farm equipment shows were held in the amphitheatre; horses-- and sometimes bicyclists--competed on the track; and Floral Hall contained exhibits of fine needlework, cakes, pies, and canned goods. In addition, the annual Fair Hop took place during the week of the fair. According to a 1891 newspaper, the dance was "always a brilliant society affair



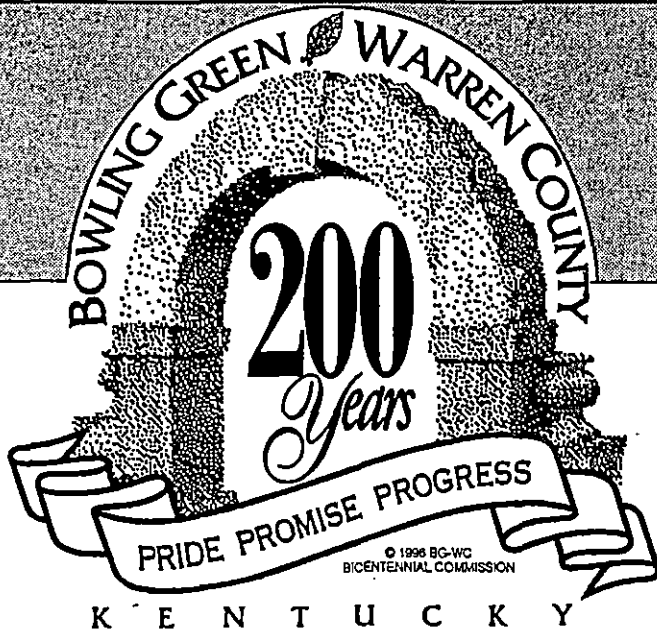
...attended by the fashionable from all over the state."

By the 1930's the fair buildings had begun to show signs of deterioration, and during World War II the grounds were abandoned. In 1952 the fair was revived and relocated to the National Guard grounds on Morgantown Road. Today the Southern Kentucky Fair (SOKY), held in Lampkin Park, offers beauty pageants, a tractor pull, livestock shows, home and farm exhibits, guest entertainers, and a grand midway that delights young and old alike.

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**HISTORY IN THE MAKING**

One of a series of stories sponsored by area businesses and organizations in support and celebration of our long heritage.



## The Fair Hop

by: Nancy Disher Baird  
Carol Crowe Carraco

For many years the Warren County Fair produced a number of festivities for area residents. One of the most enjoyable was the Fair Hop which began in 1873 and, with interruptions during World War I and World War II, continued until 1947. Under the direction of the "young gentlemen of the social set of Bowling Green," the Fair Hop was a subscription dance held at the end of the county fair. The ladies and gentlemen who attended wore formal evening wear—floor-length dresses with long white kid gloves for the women and white tie and tails, later black tuxedos and then white dinner jackets for the men. Traditionally the affair began on Friday night, starting with a Grand March at approximately 10:00 p.m., and dancing until 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. the next day. The following night there was an informal dance, called the Shadow Hop, which lasted from 10:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight.

Over the years, the Fair Hops, renowned for its decorations, was held at various locations: Neale's Hall, Getty Hall, Denhardt Hall, Beech Bend Pavilion, and Lost River Cave. The Bowling Green *Times-Journal* of August 25, 1934 reported, "The pavilion was beautifully decorated by the Deemer Floral Company [a Warren County fixture since 1902]. Branches of beech leaves covered the wall of the hall and red, green, blue, and yellow lights were arranged beneath the leaves. The ceiling was covered with white and blue paper and Japanese lanterns were suspended from the ceiling . . . [and] large baskets of red gladioli were placed throughout the hall."

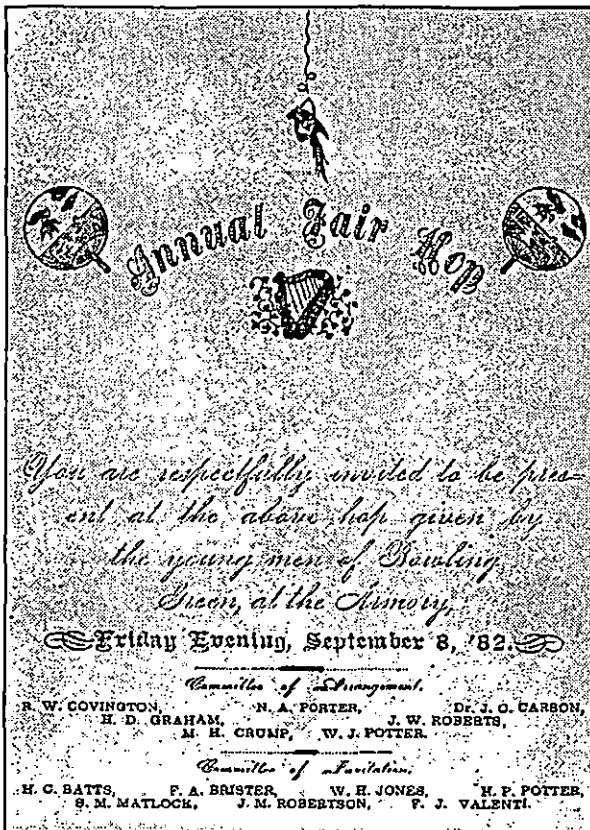


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

# BACK-TO-SCHOOL SPECIAL!

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# Quilts

PC DW  
9/30/97

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

Warren Countians have long excelled in the making of quilts, and many area homes display fine examples of this practical and beautiful artform. Entries in quilt shows, the county fair and even the Kentucky State Fair garner praise and prizes as well as envy.

Contemporary accounts often describe both the task of quilting and the finished product. The diary of Methodist minister George Richard Browder (1827-1886) gives a particularly interesting 19th century account of a quilt given to him by a Bowling Green Sunday School class, which consisted of the teacher, nine girls and one boy.

On January 18, 1879, Browder wrote that his gift was a "beautiful patchwork bed quilt made on the pattern called sunshine and shadow—with a blending of bright and somber colors—the center of the squares—velvet—the pieces of soft and well selected silk or woolen goods—and on the center piece was worked a large and beautifully embroidered letter "B" ... The stitches that ... [were] made for me! Sewing and selecting



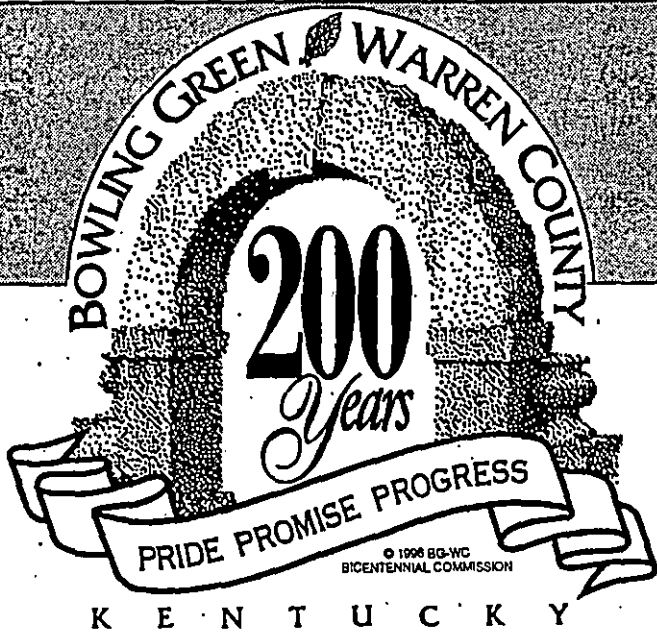
drawing from: the Kentucky Library/Manuscript/Archives

and putting in their leisure hours... The kindly feeling indicated pleases me more than the valuable quilt, though that itself is a present to be prized and preserved and handed down as an heirloom."

## They Came Early and Stayed Late - CASTNER KNOTT OPENS



For most Warren Countians Castner Knott is the anchor department store at either the old or the new mall. Yet the well known facility first opened its doors at 904 State Street in August, 1946, offering a "complete line of electrical appliances, radios, and household equipment." Although the store was scheduled to open on Friday at 9:00 a.m., a line of shoppers formed by 3 o'clock on Thursday, and by midnight over two dozen were present. The all-night waiters came prepared—some from as far away



## Colonel Thomas J. Smith

by: Nancy Disher Baird  
Carol Crowe Carraco



Illustration from the Kentucky Library, WKU

Born near Smiths Grove, Colonel Thomas J. Smith (1843-1904) was a successful 19th century businessman, public servant, and the commander of Company A, Third Kentucky Infantry during the Spanish American War. In 1867 he opened a bookstore and stationery shop in Bowling Green. The business T. J. Smith and Company, located on Frozen Row in the 1880s, advertised: "C.B.S.O.F.P.--Cheap Book Store Opposite Fountain Park." It was reputed to be the "largest of its kind in Southern Kentucky doing a business both wholesale and retail." Smith, and several local associates, also owned citrus groves and timber lands in Florida; they named the nearby railroad depot Bowling Green. In addition to business interest, Smith, an ex-Confederate sympathizer, a Democrat, and a Mason (a Kentucky combination which assured political success in the post-Civil War period), at various times served as superintendent of the county schools, a member of the city council and board of water commissioners, mayor of Bowling Green, and a director of the Warren Deposit Bank. On January 6, 1890, in his first annual report, Mayor Smith recommended "making new improvements in street building and (that) a system of sewerage is today a vital necessity, and I think they should have your careful consideration."



**Bowling Green-Warren County Bicentennial Commission**

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**OFFICIAL CALENDAR OF BICENTENNIAL EVENTS**



## **STONEY POINT**

Stoney Point community began in 1848 following the death of John White, whose will freed six of his slaves and granted them a tract of about 1800 acres of land in the northeastern corner of Warren County. After the Civil War, other African Americans bought neighboring plots from White's widow with savings or with money earned as Union soldiers. On their small holdings, the new owners constructed small log or clapboard homes; the stone foundations and chimneys for some of these structures still remain. The community of Stoney Point made few changes between 1870 and recent times.

Most Stoney Point residents worked for nearby white farmers but also raised crops and cattle on their own land to earn extra money. Although the community had a small restaurant and barber shop, social as well as religious life generally revolved around the church and school. Built in the mid 1870s, Stoney Point Church (pictured) served the religious needs of its members, and its elders oversaw the community's morals by disciplining those members found guilty of drunkenness, gambling, adultery, and other activities of which they disapproved. The sale of church "tickets" helped underwrite the pastor's salary and provided for building maintenance. Stoney Point School conducted classes in the church until the erection of a wooden structure on the church grounds at the turn-of-the century. Heated by a coal burning stove, the one room school contained a blackboard and a few crude benches and desks for its 40-60 students. Parents, like those elsewhere across the state, provided the textbooks from which their children studied English, spelling, geography and arithmetic. On the school's closing in the late 1930s, Stoney Point children bused to school at Smiths Grove.



# Woodburn

PCDN  
9/27/97

by: Nancy Disher Baird  
Carol Crowe Carraco

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To many Warren Countians, Woodburn is only a blinking light on the 31-W route to Simpson County [the town itself is actually a mile or so away along the L&N RR tracks], or perhaps to the more mature, the home of the 1931 and 1932 Kentucky Girl's Basketball Champions. Yet Woodburn, established in 1843, was once a thriving late 19th century town of over 1,000 people. It became one of two shipping points in southern Warren County for tobacco, wheat, corn, and hogs. During the Civil War, Woodburn was the site of several minor skirmishes including the burning of a train by Confederate General John Hunt Morgan. In 1877, according to a business directory, the town boasted of two hotels, five grocery stores, two blacksmith shops, two saloons, a millinery shop, a poultry house, an ice house, two private schools, and four churches. There were three physicians, a druggist, and an undertaker-cabinet maker. Most of the businesses were ocated on Cedar and Main streets. Fires have destroyed the majority of the town's buildings, but several hundred residents keep alive the town's proud traditions. Some of the most interesting stories that area residents tell about Woodburn relate to the 1937 Flood. Because of rising flood waters, the horse-drawn school [bus] wagon could not make its rounds, and the Woodburn Consolidated School did not hold classes for nine weeks. Community-minded even then, 13-year-old Joe Meng rode his pony to deliver the mail.

Illustration from the Kentucky Library

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MILITARY

## SMITH'S GROVE

Smith's Grove, Warren County's second largest community, is located on the L&N railroad line about fifteen miles north east of Bowling Green. The town apparently received its name from the post office established in 1829 near a grove of trees local residents referred to by the name of its original owner. After the completion of the L&N railroad in 1859, a town gradually formed around the small post office and nearby general store. Incorporated by the state legislature in 1871, by 1900 Smiths Grove could count 600 residents (five of whom were "physicians"), four churches, several grade schools, a new high school and the Smith's Grove College, a preparatory school that opened in the mid 1870s. Renamed Smith's Grove Vanderbilt Training School in 1901, the private co-ed school owned a large two story brick classroom building and an attractive five acres campus. The Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Christian church buildings were also "commodious . . . and comfortably furnished." The town's business district included several general stores, two groceries, and two drugstores. The livery and feed stable ran stage coaches to Mammoth Cave and nearby resorts and served as a station for the stage to Brownsville and communities on the upper Green River. The town also housed two banks, the Deposit Bank, founded in 1880 and the Farmers Bank (pictured here) which claimed resources of more than \$80,000 and proprietors of "sterling character."

Impressed with the town's temperance and hospitality, an 1885 visitor to Smith's Grove noted that not only did the town have "no saloons" but its laws prohibited druggists from filling prescriptions for more than "four ounces of whiskey or brandy."

## **Smith's Grove College**

Smith's Grove College a private primary and secondary school, opened in the mid 1870s. Founded by William W. Beck, who claimed his school was "second to none," the co-educational school had four faculty members who taught the 3Rs as well as Latin, Greek, French, German, Music, moral philosophy and art. Nearly one thousand people attended the school's dedication exercises, at which Bowling Green attorney Clarence McElroy advised parents of their role in their children's education. "Do you not visit your pastures . . .to see how your hogs, sheep and cattle are doing. . . .Then why should you neglect to visit your schools and see what progress your children make?"

In 1900 the Louisville Conference (Methodist) acquired the five acre campus and renamed it Smith's Grove Vanderbilt Training School, although it had no connection with the Nashville institution . Promotional literature stressed the school's location in a town that was "entirely free from the allurements and vices of city life" and assured parents that the faculty of five "carefully looked after" the moral and religious life of students. The grounds contained a tennis court, ball fields and gravel walkways, and although the school acknowledged the importance of physical fitness and allowed the scheduling of a few games with other schools, it did not go "to access in athletics" or allowed students lacking "high records in scholarship and deportment" to participate in intercollegiate activities.

The Smith's Grove school closed in 1913.



by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

In April 1889 the Park City Railway Company began construction of a trolley system to link the railroad depot at Main and Adams with the Morehead House at Main and State, a distance of 2050 feet. Completed by mid summer, the original mule-drawn cars that moved on steel rails set on oak cross ties were replaced six years later by electric cars. Eventually the company purchased the trolley cars and extended the line six miles, providing transportation from the boatlanding to Fairview Cemetery and the ball park at the Fairgrounds. The company constructed a mule and car barn on Kenton Street, and double tracks for passing on the north side of the square and in the 700 block of Church street (pictured here).

The slow mule-drawn cars, and later the more rapid electric street cars, provided pleasurable rides as well as convenient transportation. They carried Sunday afternoon picnickers to the river, wedding parties to churches and hotel receptions, mourners and caskets to the cemetery and inebriates home from the "wet" county to the "dry" town on Friday and Saturday nights. Outfitted with cane-covered benches that seated ten-to-twelve passengers, the cars' windows provided ventilation in the summer and a coal-burning stove gave warmth in the winter. The original fare of five cents eventually escalated -- to 12 tickets for a dollar.

The popularity of the automobile decreased usage of the

# Ding Ding Ding Goes the Trolley

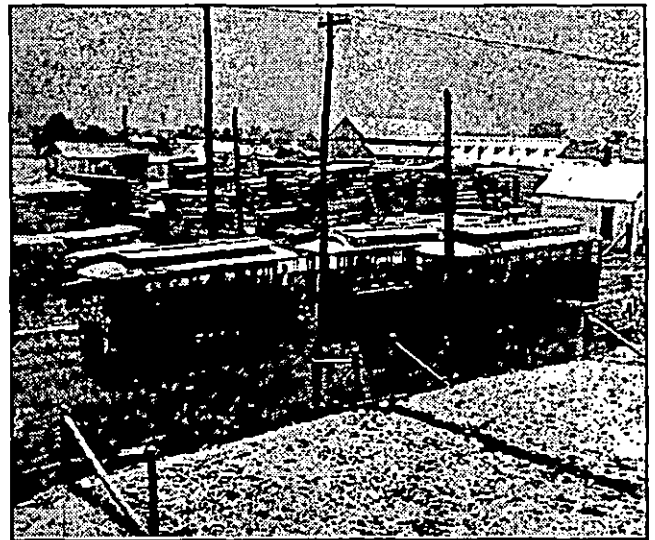


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

railway and a couple of accidents for which the company was held responsible brought Bowling Green's street car system to an end. In 1918 the company reduced fares, urged area residents to "patronize the cars" and sold some of the cars, but debts increased. The system ceased operation in 1921; the rails were dug up, the remaining six cars were burned and the trolley wires and other metal were sold for scrap.

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# The Village Smithy

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

*PCDN 9/25/97*

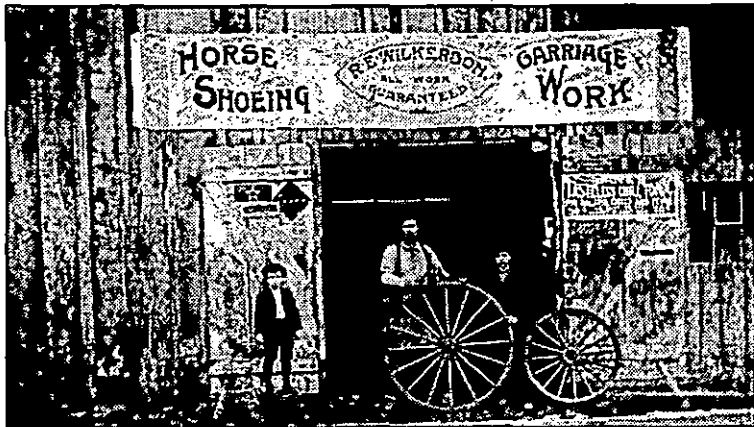


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

For much of the last 200 years, blacksmiths provided Warren County residents with essential services. Pioneer settlers depended upon the "smithy" for nails, spikes, fireplace cranes, and a variety of kitchen tools and farm implements. As hardware stores emerged, much of the blacksmith's livelihood depended upon the making and repairing of agricultural tools, harnesses and wagons and his farrier's skill in shoeing horses and mules. The 1876 Bowling Green Directory

lists six blacksmiths, five of whom were African Americans; most of their businesses were on Court Street (now 10th Street). In 1906 there were only five "smithies" listed in the directory, and most of the forges were on State Street. By 1914 the directory no longer had a category for "blacksmiths," instead it listed "garages."

Perhaps Bowling Green's best known blacksmith was Robert E. Wilkerson (1868-1943) who opened a shop at 141 Main Street in 1891. In addition to shoeing animals and forging ornamental ironwork, he manufactured and repaired fine carriages, buggies, drays and wagons. Furthermore, he sold "rubber tiring" and painted commercial signs for delivery wagons. By 1918 Wilkerson and his son Ross advertised that they now did automobile welding along with traditional blacksmith activities. A large, burly man, Robert Wilkerson also acted as the bouncer at the Potter Opera House and was a volunteer fireman.

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We have been around for quite some time, however, our store is not the same store your grandparents shopped. For 43 years the store was located in the ... Simpson Furniture relocated to





by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

## Sisters Ran Hotel

The Morehead House's best known owner-manager was Camilla Hess Herdman (1849-1905). She and her two sisters inherited the Main Street business when their mother died in 1876, and Camilla began operating it in the early 1880s. She soon renovated the hotel, adding a third story and "Fine French plate glass windows," enlarging the entrance, converting the parlor into an "elegant reading room," and landscaping a beautiful garden. Her 1897 diary details the tasks necessary to keep the Morehead House with its boarders, short-term guests, and daily diners operational. On January 1, she recorded the cost of lard to be 4 3/4 cents per pound; she bought 355 pounds. Ten days later she obtained another 335 pounds. Eggs were 11 cents per dozen. She purchased 40 dozen on three different occasions during the month. She bought 3 to 5 turkeys per week; their cost averaged around 9 cents per pound. In addition to the three square meals served daily, Herdman and her African American cook Minerva Pollard provided banquets and ladies



Illustration from the Kentucky Library, WKU

luncheons. On January 14, 1897, they served the QQQ Club a menu which consisted of "chocolate whipped cream, beaten biscuit, turkey sandwich, chicken salad and pickle with a little bunch of violets." If the group had come on another day, they might have enjoyed Herdman's White Cake. Its recipe called for 28 eggs, 5 cups of sugar, 7 cups of flour, 3 cups of butter, 2 teaspoons cream of tarter, and 1 teaspoon of soda. Camilla Herdman also established a Bowling Green Thanksgiving Tradition - free dinners for all guests at the Morehead House.

### Official Calendar of Bicentennial Events

#### Ongoing Activities

PCDN 5/20/97

- The award-winning *Bicentennial video*, "200 Years of Pride, Promise, Progress", is available to the public for check-out at the Kentucky Museum and the Bowling Green Public Library.
- "Roads, Rails and Rivers: Warren County Then and Now", is a major new permanent exhibit at the Kentucky Museum, commemorating our community's history; call 745-2592 for gallery hours.
- WKU Bicentennial Speakers Bureau: invite an expert on local history and lore to address your organization.



## Famous Author

by: Nancy Disher Baird  
Carol Crowe Carraco



Illustration from the Kentucky Library, WKU

Known as Lida to family and friends and as Eliza Calvert Hall to readers, Eliza Caroline Calvert Obenchain (1856-1935) was one of Kentucky's most famous turn-of-the-century authors. From her pen came poetry, short stories, novels, a non-fiction work on coverlets, and numerous suffrage articles, editorials, and pamphlets. The granddaughter of Presbyterian minister Samuel Calvert, Lida attended local private schools and college in Ohio for one year. She taught school in Bowling Green until her marriage to Major William A. Obenchain, the President of Ogden College, in 1885. They later lived on the corner of 14th and Chestnut streets. After the births of their four children, Lida Obenchain resumed her writing career and produced a number of essays in defense of women's rights. Her compositions relied upon the use of cleverly turned phrases to reveal the irony of woman's non-status as a citizen. In one article, she commanded all women to repeat thrice daily, "Taxation without representation is tyranny, and woman's suffrage is right." In another she stated, "I'm not denyin' that women are fools; God Almighty mad'em to match the men." Her most popular short story "Sally Ann's Experience," which combined her interest in women's rights with south central Kentucky local color and dialect, appeared in her Aunt Jane of Kentucky (1907), a collection of short stories which Theodore Roosevelt said should be required reading in every home.

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PCDN 5/12/97





by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

## Vice-President Stevenson Visits

Late 19th century Bowling Green boasted of a number of fraternal organizations with long and illustrious histories. Tradition has it that Henry Clay signed the dispensation for Bowling Green's first Masonic Lodge in 1821. Dressed in formal wear with insignias of office, members of Lodge No. 73, pictured here, welcomed Vice-President Adali E. Stevenson and his wife Letitia to town during an 1896 swing through the state. Christian County native, fellow Mason, and a Democrat, Stevenson gave a two hour speech in which he did not "mince words... his voice (was) musical and far-carrying, his elocution good." Mrs. Stevenson, the president of the newly formed Daughters of the American Revolution, charmed local ladies and did some politicking of her own, as she urged them to support public endeavors, in fact



Illustration from the Kentucky Library, WKU

"all that makes for good citizenship." As for Vice-President Stevenson, he never forgot his "electrifying" visit in Bowling Green. While he was visiting Professor Benjamin F. Cabell at Potter College for Young Ladies on Vinegar Hill, now the site of Western Kentucky University, lightning struck the building, destroyed the telephone box, and mildly shocked everyone there.

PCDN 5/14/97

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# B. J. Borrone Band

*P.C.B.N.  
9/22/95*

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

Warren County has a rich musical tradition that includes: a symphony orchestra; brass, dance, and string ensembles; church and community choirs and singing groups; minstrel shows, operas and operettas; student musicals; and an oratorio society. Several musicians and musical groups, such as the Hilltoppers, Larnelle Harris, and Government Cheese, have enjoyed regional and national prominence.

But perhaps none of them were in as much local demand as the early 20th century B. J. Borrone Band. Directed by the short, stout Italian native (pictured on the right) the six-piece ensemble provided music for parties, picnics, and parades and dirges for funerals. Quite the town booster, Borrone owned the Bowling Green Laundry, and he may well have convinced two other downtown businessmen, George Vogel, who holds the violin, and "Patsy" Fitzpatrick, who has the bass fiddle, to join the group.

In 1908 local poet-novelist and the wife of a Civil War veteran, Lida Calvert Obenchain (her



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

nom de plume was Eliza Calvert Hall) obviously had Borrone's Band in mind when she penned, I heard the band play Dixie By God! I heard every note And I thought of Manassas and 'Shiloh And a lump came up in my throat

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# Turn-Of-The-Century Collegiate Football

PCDN 6/6/97

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

Collegiate athletics have long played a role in Bowling Green-Warren County life. One of Western Kentucky University's precursors, the Southern Normal School and Business College even had a turn-of-the-century football team. The coach Dan McGugan (third row, second from the left) traveled to Bowling Green via train three mornings a week for practice and then returned to Nashville at noon to his other position at Vanderbilt. In 1905 the team played a six game season, but statistics seem, perhaps for the best, to be lost. However, the experiment was discontinued the next year. Costs for uniforms, equipment, travel, and the coach's salary were practically prohibitive for the fledgling institution. In addition to expenses, players entered and left school at such irregular intervals that developing a squad was almost impossible. Although the school's proprietor Henry Hardin



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

Cherry (third row, first on right) posed with the team, his attitude was not supportive. Believing that students came to Bowling Green only to further their scholastic education, not play, he declared, "The school. . . will continue to advise against the organization of football teams and recommends instead frequent nature excursions into the hills, woods, and on the rivers that the soul may commune with. . . nature." For years thereafter athletics would be intramural with fierce competition among the classes and literacy societies.

**Golf Gifts For  
Dad On Or Off  
The Course**

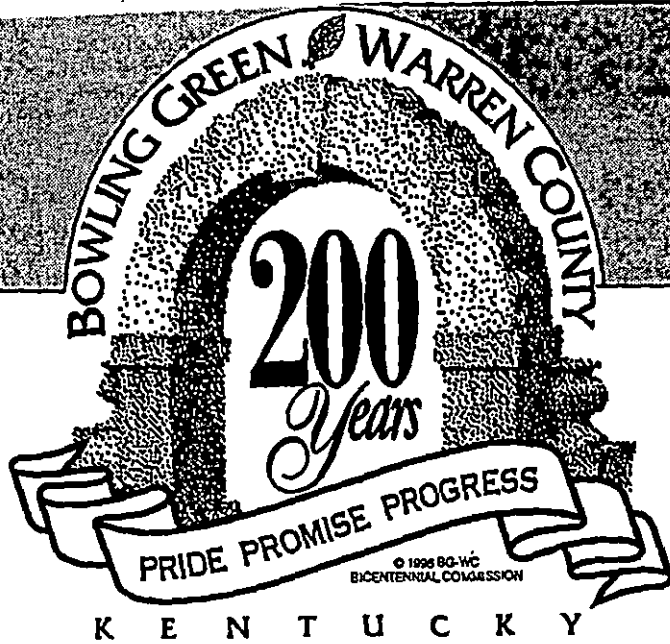
Golf Balls

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# Spanish American War Vets

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

The Spanish American War of 1898 saw the enlistment of three regiments of the Kentucky State Guard (the recently renamed militia). Colonel T. J. Smith of Bowling Green commanded Company A, Third Kentucky Infantry during the conflict. Local volunteers included nine sets of brothers and two stepbrothers. Their pay was \$15.60 per month. Excitement, confusion, and boredom marked the brief wartime experiences of local lads, and they sickened, and even died, from tainted rations -- "embalmed beef" --, mumps, typhoid, and yellow fever. According to veteran A. M. Causey, "we fought with poor equipment, poor food, antiquated guns and black powder." In 1971, Warren County resident and retired Methodist minister, the Reverend C. P. Walton



Illustration from the Kentucky Library, WKU

recalled his participation in the Charge of San Juan Hill, stating, "We laid low in the trenches and then we just tore off up the hill. I may not have been the first one over the top but I was one of the first." Two orphaned Cuban children, renamed Monday and Tuesday, returned with the soldiers and grew up in nearby Barren County. As late as the mid-1970s, Kentucky could boast of eighteen surviving veterans of the Spanish American war. Four of them resided in Warren County.

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*PCDN*  
*5/16/97*

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by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

Although he had lost his bid for the presidency on three different occasions, 1896, 1900, and 1908, William Jennings Bryan remained one of the most popular and eloquent speakers in America. Known for his personality, sincerity, and forcefulness, the "silver-tongued" Bryan's "regular fee" was \$250 for a ninety-minute address, but he paid his own expenses and reduced his fee when attendance fell below one-half the seating capacity of the assembly hall. On April 24, 1911, in Bowling Green Bryan began his eleven-stop Kentucky tour to raise funds for the YMCA. That morning he spoke to the students at Western State Normal School (now WKU), and at 2:00 p.m. "All the autos in the city and county"--a total of twenty-three--participated in the

## William Jennings Bryan in Bowling Green

*PCDN  
6/19/97*

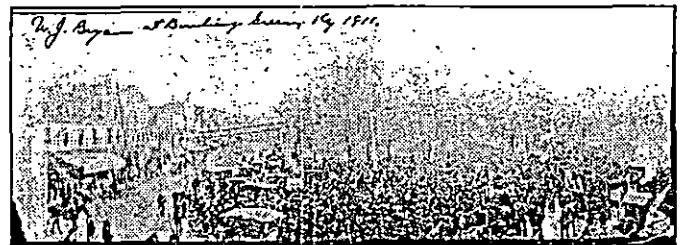


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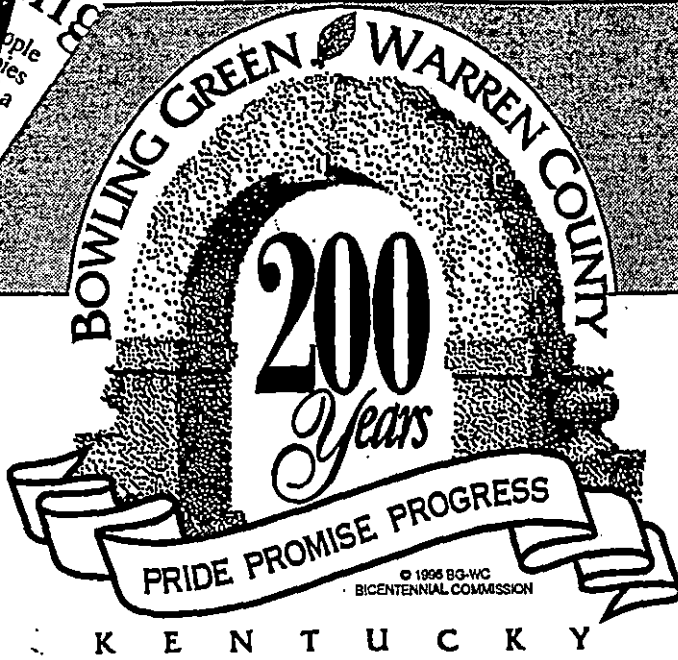
motorcade. Led by a local band, the parade started at the YMCA building on State Street, wound around the square and then proceeded up College to Van Meter Hall. Several thousand supposedly heard Bryan deliver his famous lecture entitled "The Signs of the Times", at three o'clock, and then some sixty local benefactors dined with him before his departure for Russellville. E.S. Woosley of Smiths Grove, the state field secretary for the YMCA, accompanied Colonel Bryan on his whirlwind tour through the Blue Grass State.

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K E N T U C K Y

by: Nancy Disher Baird  
Carol Crowe Carraco

In his 1977 book, *Medicine in Kentucky*, historian John Ellis wrote that no man had greater impact on the American Medical Profession and its institutions than Joseph McCormack (1847-1922). A graduate of the Miami Medical College of Ohio, McCormack came to Bowling Green in 1876 and a few years later was appointed to the newly created State Board of Health, then an advisory group with no power and no budget. For 28 years McCormack operated the board from a small turret room in his home (later St. Joseph Hospital and now the site of the First Baptist Church parking lot.) Under his leadership, the board became an effective, model organization.

McCormack designed Kentucky's increasingly restrictive medical practice laws and drafted every piece of medical legislation that Kentucky adopted 1888-1921. Because he personally issued all their licenses, McCormack knew every physician in the state. His success in mixing politics and medicine caught the attention of the Kentucky Medical Association and the American Medical Association and he aided them in the organization of effective county medical societies in Kentucky and state societies across the nation. A gifted orator, McCormack delivered speeches laced with down-home phrases and biblical metaphors. Berating physicians for running their profession "like a widder woman runs a farm," he campaigned to improve medical education promoted the cause of continuing education and members in medical societies and urged cooperation among physicians. The Frankfort Building housing the Kentucky Board of Health is named in honor of this Bowling Green physician and his son Arthur (who served as the board's chief health officer 1915-1943.)



Illustration from the Kentucky Library



7

9



**CELEBRATE 200!**

*The Reserves Network salutes the citizens and businesses*



## "Patsy" Fitzpatrick

by: Nancy Disher Baird  
Carol Crowe Carraco

PCDN  
7/21/97



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

In 1889 Patrick Henry "Patsy" Fitzpatrick (1861-1927) took over the family saloon at 330 Main Street (now the site of the Three Brothers Lounge). He and his sister, "Miss Maggie" lived over the business in a large apartment filled with family treasures; it's columned entrance with the name "P.H. Fitzpatrick" on the lintel can still be seen today. A second generation Irish American, Patsy, according to his ads, sold

liquor only to "men of honor and men of money, who can afford it." A prominent sign also announced "No boys under 21 years of age are allowed in this saloon." Well-liked and successful, it was said that the "only limitation to Fitzpatrick's circle of friends is imposed by physics ...[since] it included only those whom he never saw."

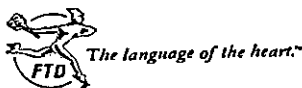
During Prohibition, Patsy substituted dairy products for alcohol and converted his saloon into an ice cream parlor, which he called the Fountain of Youth. His business card asserted:

Just drop into Patsy's. I'm telling the truth  
All your troubles will vanish at the  
Fountain of Youth.

Where pure Coca Cola, Creams, Drinks and  
good cheer.

Are displayed with pleasure each day of the  
year.

Thereafter, ladies as well as gentlemen frequented the establishment. Fitzpatrick is the rotund man in shirtsleeves standing with his hand on the baby carriage.



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**"ROSES DAY TODAY"**  
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## Edgar Cayce, Photographer and Psychic

PCDN  
6/27/97

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

Perhaps the nation's best known psychic, Edgar Cayce (1877-1945), a Hopkinsville native, practiced medical diagnosis by clairvoyance for over forty years, establishing the Association for Research and Enlightenment in Virginia Beach, Virginia. While in his mid-twenties and before realizing the extent of his mental gifts, Cayce resided in Bowling Green for about eight years, 1902-1909. While employed at L.D. Potter's Bookstore on State Street, he invented, and sold to Parker Brothers, a card game called "Pit", or "Board of Trade", based upon cornering the wheat market on the New York Board of Trade. Cayce joined the Christian Church, taught Sunday School, married Gertrude Evans of Hopkinsville, and fathered a son, Hugh Lynn. In 1906 Cayce opened his first photography studio on College Street, and after a fire he moved to 932 1/2 State Street. There he employed three assistants in a studio which remained open, despite a second fire, until his return to Hopkinsville in 1909. Advertisements in Potter College's literary magazine THE GREEN AND GOLD stated, "There is no use talking, the pictures that come from Cayce's are the finest ever made." Although picture-making was still an inexact science, he produced beautiful photographs like the one above and provided picture



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

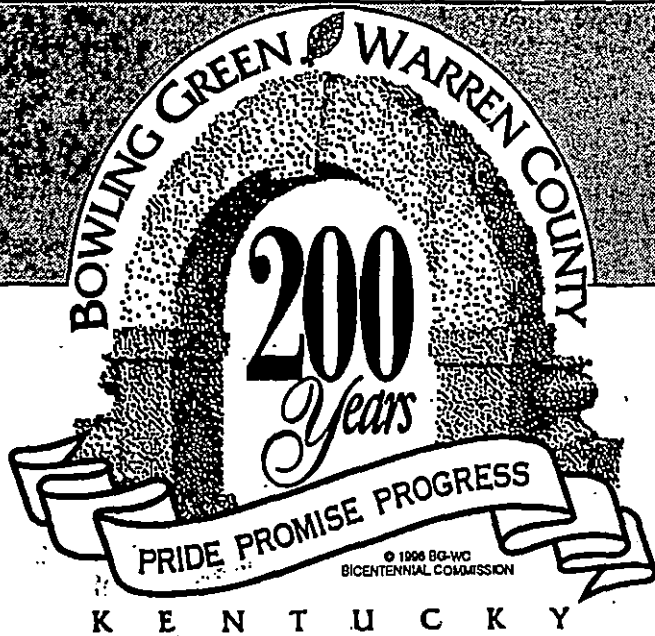
frames as well. As for psychic observations while in Bowling Green, according to a traditional story the E.Q.B. Literary Club observed one of Edgar Cayce's readings in 1906 and dutifully recorded it in the organization's minutes which have disappeared. Do you know their whereabouts?



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PCDW  
7/17/97

# Early Automobiles

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

It would probably be impossible to agree on the ownership of the first automobile in Warren County. Bowling Green native Miss Louise Farnsworth thinks that it may well have been her brother, Bland (pictured here), and who would argue with someone who is almost a centenarian and retired teacher to boot? Whatever the case, by 1910 the auto had begun to replace the horse and buggy as the transportation vehicle of choice. Livery stables, such as Toy and Son, on the corner of Tenth and State, even expanded their rentals to include "Auto For Hire." By 1914 there were at least two automobile dealerships in Bowling Green; their advertisements can be read in the Bowling Green Messenger for that year. The Imperial Auto Company sold Studebakers and offered a four-passenger Touring Car for \$1050, a six-passenger Touring Car for \$1550, and a sporty "Model 35 Coupe" for \$1850. However, the

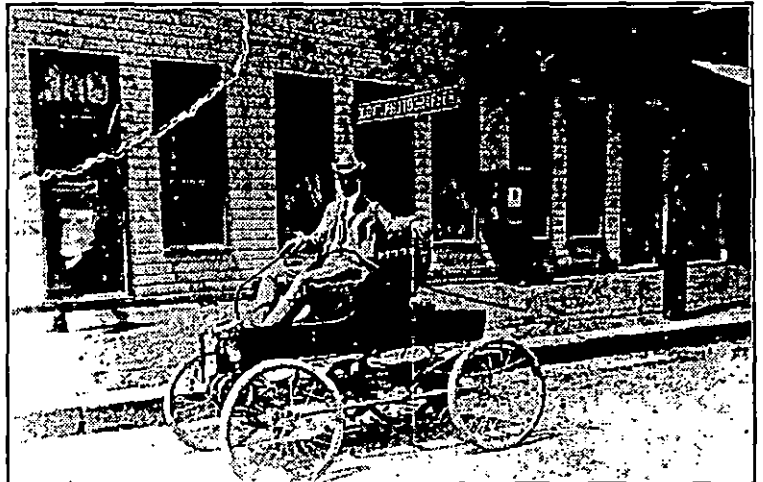


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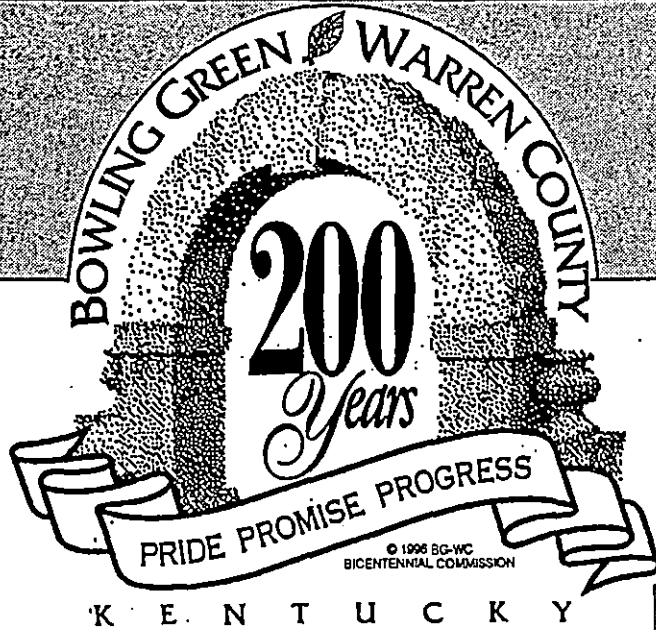
Ford Motor Company listed Town Cars for \$690, Touring Cars for \$490, and "Runabouts" for \$440. Automobiles were quickly integrated into Warren County culture, and their increasing number led to demands for better county roads and city streets. Improving area by-ways did not come too soon for many. An often repeated story told of a mud hole on the Massey Mills-Allen Springs Road, which ran between the Matlock and Boyce communities. It was so deep that if anything fell in, it was at least three hours before a splash was heard!

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## The Evangelist Mordecai Ham

PCDN 6/23/97

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

The evangelist Mordecai Fowler Ham, Jr. (1877-1961) is best remembered as the Southern Baptist preacher who converted Billy Graham in 1934. Born in nearby Allen County and a graduate of Bowling Green's Ogden College, Ham preached his first sermon in 1900. A fundamentalist and a "hell fire and damnation preacher", Ham often gave what he called the "Pink Sermon for Tenderfoots." During the sermon he donned kid gloves and clerical collar which he dramatically removed in the course of his remarks to begin preaching "hog jowl and turnip greens", his own brand of rural revivalism. Ham served various area churches until 1903 when he went to New Orleans to begin the first of almost forty years of evangelistic crusades. An active participant in the prohibition movement, he returned to Bowling Green in 1905 and in 1910 to preach against the use and sale of alcohol. Ham incurred the wrath of the state's liquor distributors who circulated pamphlets charging that he condemned the Methodist and Presbyterian churches [not



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

true] as well as Catholicism, Judaism, and African Americans [true]. Someone also accused Ham of murdering his first wife. In the face of continuous assault the Bowling Green First Baptist Church passed a resolution in 1916 stating, "We want the public to know that Mr. Ham's life is above suspicion and that he enjoys the confidence and love of all good people in the community where he was born and reared." In the later years of his life, Ham moved to Louisville and carried on a fundamentalist radio ministry which was heard in many Warren County homes.

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# Theatres

PCDN 7/14/97

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

While today's residents of Bowling Green-Warren County attend movies in the city's shopping centers, movie-goers of bygone eras came to the heart of the city, to the Square, for their motion picture entertainment. And, depending upon the year, they would have a choice of as many as three or four movie houses. There was, of course, the town's oldest theatre, the Columbia, which was owned by the Crescent Amusement Company of Nashville. The Columbia became the Capitol Theatre in 1920; it was raised in 1938, rebuilt, and reopened in March of 1939. In addition to the Columbia Theatre, the Crescent Amusement Company also owned the Elite Theatre on the corner of Main and State streets (now the site of Hilliard Lyons). It began showing movies in October, 1911 in what was once a store room previously occupied by Alex Duval's merchandise shop. Very luxurious for its day, the Elite featured a gold and mahogany interior decorated in the "latest style,"



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

broad aisles, four exits, and brass light fixtures. The Elite closed in 1920. Just down the street, at 432 Main, the Princess Theatre, which had 780 seats, entertained Bowling Green residents from 1914 to 1957. Around the corner on College Street, the Diamond Theatre opened in the 1920s during the Warren County oil boom. It was rebuilt and renamed the State Theatre in 1949. At its grand opening showing of "The Judge Steps Out," the State seated 1400 and bragged of carpeted aisles, an automatic ticket vendor, and a cry room. This structure has housed the Fountain Square Church since 1985.

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## The Columbia Theatre

PCDN  
6/17/97

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

Residents of Bowling Green and Warren County have long enjoyed attending movies. By the turn of the century, small movie theatres appeared in temporary quarters on Park Row, and in the spring of 1911 the Columbia Theatre opened in a remodeled facility on the Main Street side of the Square. Owned by the Crescent Amusement Company of Nashville, the Columbia Theatre seated 200 in folding cane-bottomed opera chairs, used "electric fans" to provide "first class ventilation", and "conformed to the fire laws of the larger cities." The admission fee was a nickel. The Columbia offered daily matinees and evening features shown by hand cranked projectors, and the management promised to "permit nothing. . .but what is moral, clean, healthy, and instructive." Apparently local audiences liked the selections; a pre-WW I newspaper

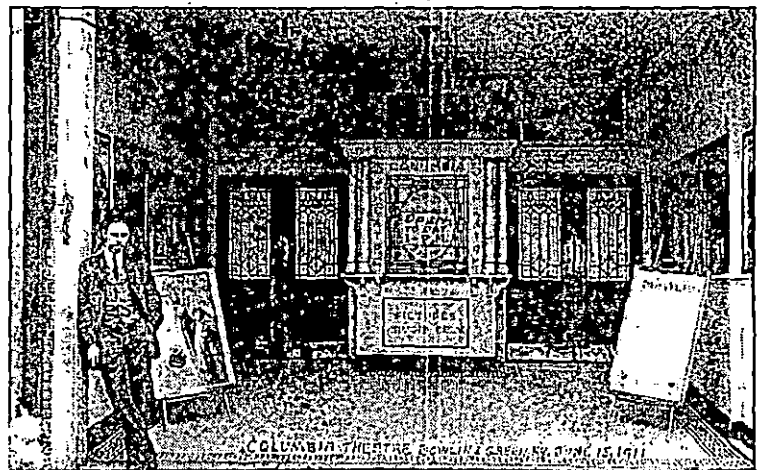


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

reported that the Columbia had become a "popular resort for ladies to drop in while shopping," and the facility usually played to a full house. The theatre's popularity necessitated the addition of new equipment, including two projectors to eliminate long waits between reels, a sound projector, a larger screen, additional fans, and a magnificent Wurlitzer "electric orchestra." The Columbia Theatre was extensively remodeled in 1920 and renamed the Capitol Theatre. The building was razed and rebuilt in 1938, reopening in March of 1939.

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*PCDW  
7/21/97*

## Flood Of 1913

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird



Illustration from the Kentucky Library, WKU

In the last few months much has been said and written about the Flood of 1997, and numerous comparisons have been made to the Flood of 1937. However, few have recalled that Bowling Green-Warren County experienced a far worse flood in 1913. That year the Barren River rose to a level nearly 46 feet above flood stage, more than four feet above the high water mark of the future 1937 floor. Traffic was interrupted on the Barren River, and among those buildings lost at the Double Springs Landing (now on Boat Landing

Road) was the attached warehouse (its roof can be seen on the right) of the McMullin-Higgin's Tavern. Although there was no whiskey in the warehouse, it did contain a number of empty white oak barrels and a "handsome flying jenny" -- a merry-go-round. Shortly after this picture was taken by an amateur photographer, the warehouse broke loose from the main building, and was destroyed. Observers reported empty whiskey barrels floating down the Barren River. The tavern was flooded as well, with water reaching to the second floor. Business did not resume until the submerged trolley line from downtown Bowling Green was restored weeks later. The trolley, literally and figuratively, brought customers from the "dry" city to the "wet" county.

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HISTORY IN THE MAKING**



PCDN  
7/9/97

# Pushins

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

Bowling Green businessmen have always tried to keep up with the times, and Sam Pushin was no exception. Born in Lithuania in 1871, Pushin came to the United States as a child. Like a number of other Jewish immigrants, such as the Dawahares, he began a dry goods peddling business, and he eventually came to Bowling Green. In 1893 he operated Pushin's Red Lion Store which advertised such bargains as \$5.00 suits for \$2.65. The business gradually expanded until a new building was necessary. Pushin acquired property at the corner of Main and College streets in 1916 and began construction of a three story brick building, which was designed by local architect, Creedmore Flenor, and cost \$250,000. When it opened in 1921, the 36,000 square foot Pushin's Department Store was the largest in town, and "Mr. Sam" often

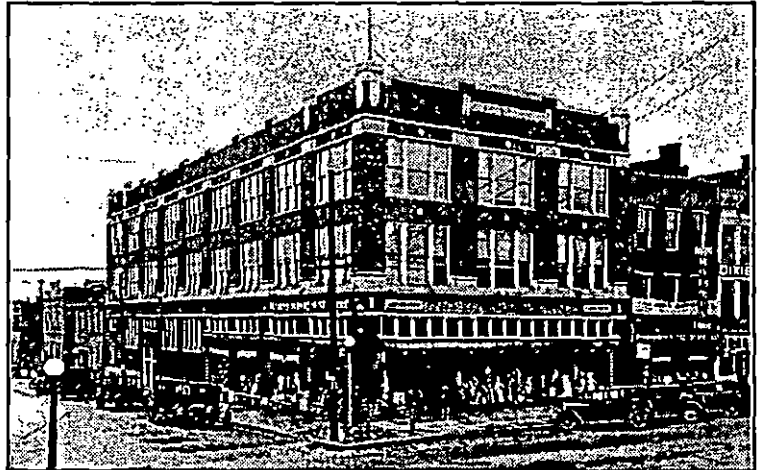


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

boasted that it was the largest department store in south central Kentucky. Pushin's was outfitted with elegant displays that contrasted sharply with older approaches to retailing. It was also the first store in town to have an elevator. Like most downtown businesses, Pushin's enjoyed a prosperous trade while Main Street remained the center of Bowling Green's commercial district. The store closed in 1980. Shortly thereafter, Kelley Business Systems restored the building and has occupied it ever since.



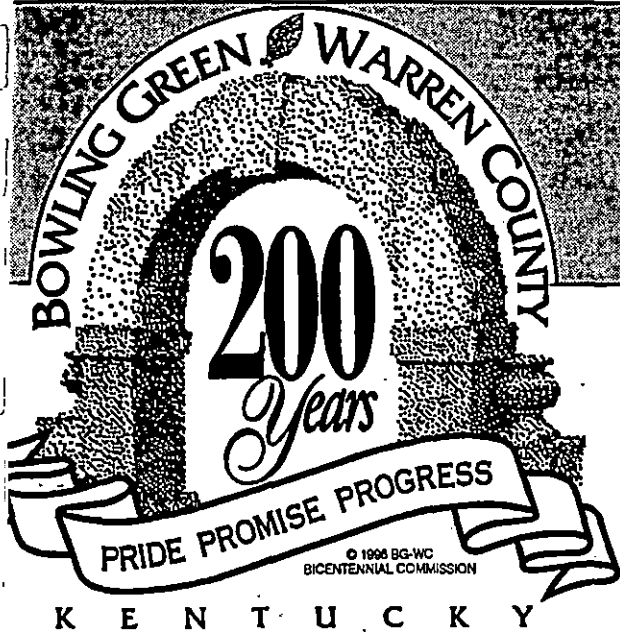
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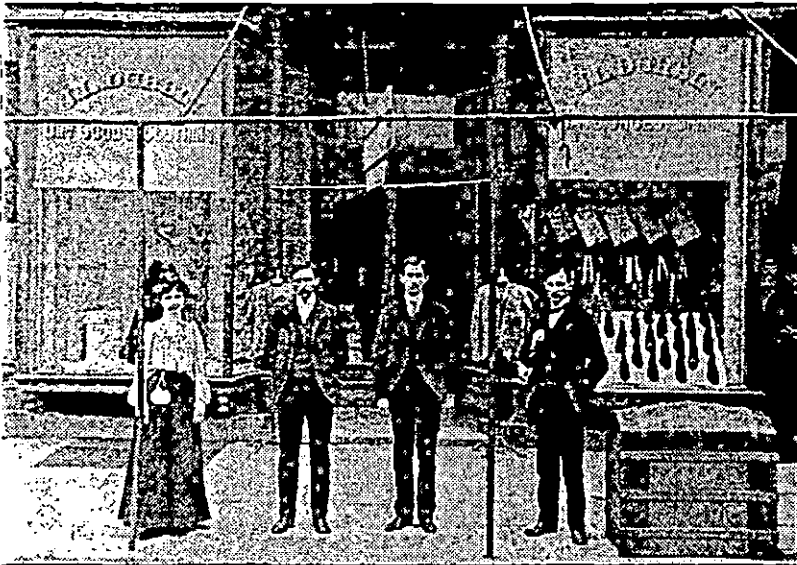
100... Cold Fall Journal



# Durbin's

*PCDA  
9/11/97*

by: Nancy Disher Baird  
Carol Crowe Carraco



Left to right: Agnes Morgan, Stephen Durbin, Rumsey Isabil and J.L. Durbin.]

Downtown Bowling Green once had a number of dry goods stores on the Square, and one of the longest lived was J.L. Durbin and Company, which opened in 1898 and ceased operation in 1976. Established by J.L. Durbin (1872-1967), the store was first located on Park Row and was called the Golden Rule Store for the biblical verse on which the business operated. Within a few months the store moved to College Street, locating first in the old Opera House (Bowling Green Bank & Trust Building), for about fifteen years, and then in 1914 at 923 College (now the site of Warren County Attorney's office).

Beginning with a \$500 inventory, Durbin's soon grew to include "everything necessary to please fastidious tastes" as

well as "bolt denim and flannel." A good pair of shoes could be purchased for \$1, with the most expensive footwear in the shop selling for \$5. Over the years, the store was remodeled—an adjoining building was added in 1961—and departmentalized with ladies, children, men and boys, and piece goods areas. A 1970s advertisement declared, "Durbin's is 75 years old, but you'd think they're 16 from the backbreaking effort they're making to save you money on better quality merchandise." Always known as a customer-friendly store, Durbin's business creed came from its founder, "Mr. J.L.", who repeatedly said, "When I have a sale, I try to offer the public a little more than they would expect from the advertising. This makes for happy customers."

On behalf of the 300 plus members of the Builders Association of Bowling Green, we "CONGRATULATE" Bowling Green/Warren County in its celebration of 200 years of Pride, Promise and Progress!

In 1962, forming from a few concerned contractors, the Builders Association of Bowling Green, a professional non-profit trade association was formed. Starting with fewer than 20 members, the association now has over 300 individuals/companies related to the construction industry within its membership. The association is chartered by and affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders and the Home Builders Association of Kentucky. The governing body of the Builders Association of Bowling Green is an all volunteer Board of Directors, elected by the members. All members are approved by the Board of Directors, and there are two categories of membership in the association: 1) the "Registered Builder" Membership, open to any person, firm, corporation, whose principle business is in the construction of or remodeling of housing units.

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One of a series of stories sponsored by area businesses and organizations in support and celebration of our local heritage.



## Champion Corn Grower

PCDN  
7/25/97

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

At the beginning of the 20th century farming was the primary Warren County occupation, and it would continue to be until well after World War II. As the Chamber of Commerce once bragged, "The soil, the climate, and the market have conspired to make Warren County the most agricultural county in Western Kentucky." In 1900, for example, 40,513 acres of corn produced 819,895 bushels, about 20 bushels per acre. Farmers, both young and old, vied for recognition for having the greatest yield per acre. But in January, 1913 there was little competition when fifteen-year-old Warren Countian Lester Bryant (pictured here on the right with the ox he used to work his crop) was recognized as the State Champion Corn Grower. He raised 148 bushels of corn on his one-acre plot in Rockfield and won a trip to Washington D.C. In fact, two other Warren County boys, Vas and James Jackson, had also won "signal honors" at the State Corn Growers Fair in Lexington; they had produced the

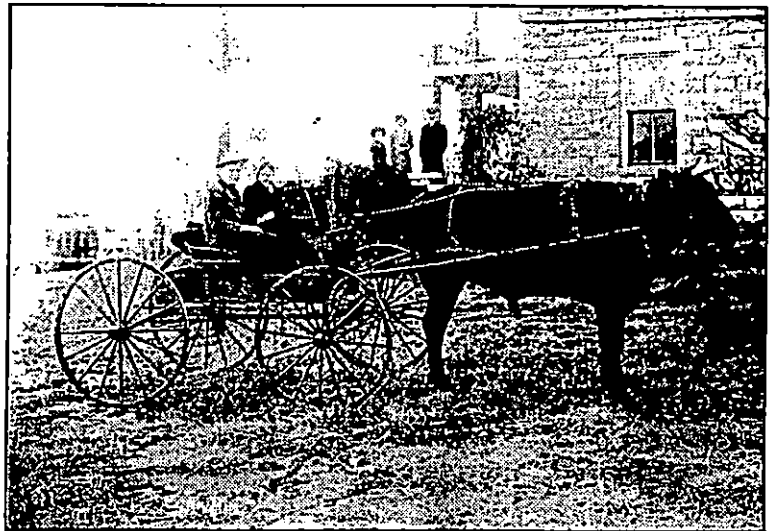
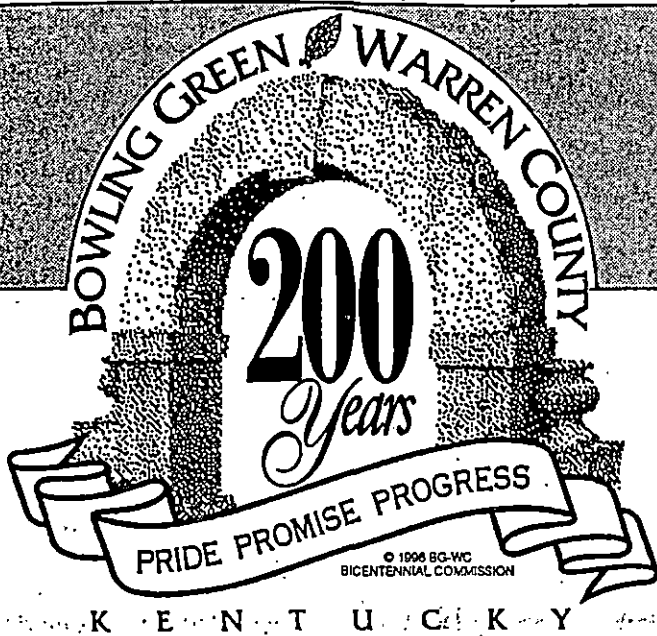


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

"ten best ears" and the "one best ear" respectively. Bryant, however, was the only one to win a trip to the nation's capital. Before boarding the L&N train, he confided to his friends that the prize trip was only the first of many which he planned to take. Unfortunately tragedy intervened before he could make good his boast. Unaccustomed to modern city gas lighting, Lester Bryant blew out the flame instead of turning the valve on his hotel room's light fixture and was asphyxiated.

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# A Soldier Remembers

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

America's entry into World War I was reflected in the Bowling Green City Minutes of April 16, 1917, which stated that the city pledged its "full, unqualified and loyal support" to the United States Government in the "present war with the Imperial German government." Some 84,000 Kentuckians answered the "Call to Make the World Safe for Democracy." About one thousand young Warren County men and several women served in the armed services; four received Distinguished Service Crosses, two, including aviation ace Victor Strahm, were awarded the croix de guerre, and many were cited for bravery in battle. Fifty-nine gave their lives. Civilians supported salvage and liberty loan drives and volunteered for Red Cross activities. In an unpublished letter referring to his brief visit to Bowling Green en route to an army base, a soldier wrote: "The



Illustration from the Kentucky Library, WKU

streets were lined with people. We were cheered and applauded all the way (from the train depot to the center of town). The last block before we reached the square, girls ran out and threw flowers at us. When we drew into the square there was a mob. Flags were everywhere. All the Kentucky belles... were on the job. The girls had big baskets of all that was good and every man received a package of cigarettes, apples, and chocolates... I will never forget our stay in Bowling Green."

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PCW 6/3/97

# Victor Strahm, WWI Aviation Ace

by: Carol Crowe Carraco  
Nancy Disher Baird

When the United States entered WWI in 1917, Kentuckians responded with fervor, and over 84,000 served in the conflict. In Warren County about one thousand residents joined the armed forces with fifty-nine making the ultimate sacrifice. Many were cited for bravery in battle. Bowling Green's Victor Strahm (1896-1957) was one of these heroes. The son of a native German who had served in the Imperial Army before immigrating to the United States and becoming a music professor, Vic Strahm joined the Army not long after the declaration of war. With nine weeks of training, he became a pilot as well as an aerial photographer. His first overseas mission was to take pictures of fortifications and trenches in Alsace Lorraine, the area of his father's birth. The mission was unsuccessful because he was attacked by armed German planes and anti-aircraft guns. Twenty-seven shots hit his plane, with one passing between his thumb and index finger as he held the wheel. He returned to his base, asked for another plane, and resumed his mission within a half hour. This time he made thirty-six photographs of the Metz fortress with

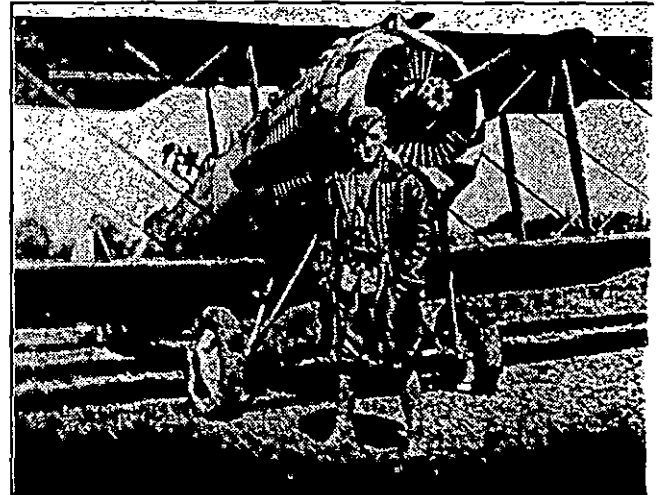


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

its three new airdromes before being attacked seven German planes. By skillful maneuvering he shot down five of the attackers and managed to escape. For his heroism, he received the Distinguished Service Cross, the French Croix Guerre, with three palms, and two more special palms, and a citation from General Joseph Pershing for bravery in battle. After the war remained in the army, saw action in WWII, a retired a brigadier general.

## Official Calendar of Bicentennial Events

Here are just some of the events scheduled for June!

- 21 *Picnic Pops 1997, "Journey Through Time,"* at the National Corvette Museum Amphitheatre. Elvis Presley lives again, with impersonator performances of his greatest hits. Also featured are the band sound of Southern Kentucky Concert Band and Lost River Cave Big Band, and children's activities. Gates open at 3:00 for pre-concert events, including an antique auto show, blacksmith demonstrations. Tickets on sale at Capitol Arts Center. 782-ARTS. \$6 per person; \$20 family package.



PCDW  
7/22/97

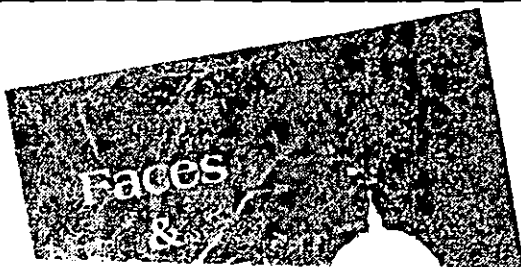
## Alfred Leland Crabb, Sr.

by: Carol Crowe Garraco & Nancy Disher Baird

Born in Warren County's Girkin-Plum Springs community, Alfred Leland Crabb, Sr. (1884-1979) is remembered as a nationally known educator. During a long productive career, he served as a public school principal, history professor and dean at Western, and a professor at Nashville's George Peabody College. There he edited the Peabody Journal of Education for three decades. Author of numerous textbooks, Crabb is best known for his eleven historical novels. His *Peace at Bowling Green* is considered by many to be his best work. In it he chronicles the life of pioneer settler Jacob Skiles and his family and the growth of Bowling Green between 1803 and 1865. Crabb's fictional characters mingle with historical persons in a lively, well-crafted, and historically accurate account of peoples, places, and events in 19th century Kentucky. Discussing the homefront during the Civil War, he wrote, "Sugar simply didn't exist in Warren County. The people had learned to beat the opossums to the persimmons that clung on the boughs or dropped to the ground, for there was a very choice sweetness in the flesh of the persimmon." Considered verbose by critics, Crabb freely admitted, "My motto is that ink was made to be shed."



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# Kentucky's Gubernatorial Races

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

Kentucky's gubernatorial races always bring forth interest as candidates canvas the commonwealth, and Warren

County, as one of the state's larger population centers, receives frequent visits from political hopefuls. The Election of 1915 was a particularly lively one. It pitted Democratic nominee Augustus O. Stanley of Henderson against Edwin Porch Morrow, a Republican from London. Although party platforms differed little, the two politicians provided the state with one of the most colorful campaigns ever. Close personal friends, Stanley and Morrow participated in a rollicking race which has become a part of Kentucky folklore.

The most famous story about the race purportedly took place in at least two dozen different locations. Perhaps Bowling Green was the location since the candidates were here together on at least two occasions. As the story goes, Morrow and Stanley, who had spent the previous evening eating and drinking together on a train as they traveled to a speaking engagement, found themselves on the platform on a hot summer evening. Stanley, who had fortified himself with bourbon, grew sick and vomited in front of the entire crowd. Later, when he stepped to the podium, he apologized and solemnly said, "Ladies and gentlemen, this just proves what I have saying all over Kentucky, Ed Morrow plain makes me sick to my stomach."

When the votes were counted, Stanley had 219,991 and Morrow 219,520. A 471 vote victory for the Democrats. In Warren County there was a 371 plurality vote for Stanley.



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## Oil Boom

PCDN  
9/11/97

by: Carol Crowe Carraco  
Nancy Disher Baird

For a brief period in the first quarter of the 20th century the production of oil became a worthy rival for Kentucky's "King Coal" industry. The so-called Davenport and Moulder pools in Warren County were important sources for the liquid "black gold" in the era after WW I.

Reports of oil in Warren County date to the late 1790s with stories of slick scum being discovered by early settlers on the surface of Oil Spring near Drakes Creek. But the five year heyday for oil production began in 1919. Bowling Green became a boom town when close to three hundred rigs pumped petroleum from the earth. Drilling machinery jammed the railroad depot and wells bored at a depth of less than 500 feet produced 500 barrels a day. Oil men filled the hotels, and those who could not find rooms lived in tents pitched in vacant lots. The old Baptist Church on Main Street became the Oil Exchange as fortunes were made and lost during the boom. The Big Jack Oil and Development Company hold the record of having drilled forty-two wells without a dry hole. For a time three refineries operated in Warren County and a pipeline to Owensboro connected the local field with others.

But all too soon the boom ended. Today a few rigs—looking more like "cooties" from a 1950s children's game than big Texas equipment—still dot the landscape. In 1995, according to the Blue Ridge Drilling Company, Warren County produced almost 111,000 barrels of crude oil.



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

## "A Local Family That Cares"

**JC Kirby & Son - Now With 2 Locations**

820 Lovers Lane  
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## **LILLIAN SOUTH, M.D.**

Although many women practice medicine today, few did so in the first half of the twentieth century. Lillian South (1874-1966) was an exception. The daughter of a Bowling Green doctor, South earned her medical degree at the Philadelphia College for Women and eventually completed post graduate work at Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and the Pasteur Clinic in Paris. In 1910 she joined the State Board of Health (then in Bowling Green). As the board's bacteriologist, South traversed the state by mule, buggy and model T, conducting studies on malaria, trachoma, hookworm and other maladies that plagued the commonwealth and launched educational campaigns to acquaint Kentuckians on the correlation between hygiene and health.

South also supervised the board's bacteriology school and lab (pictured here) that produced tons of vaccines--inoculations for 12 scarlet fever epidemics, six cerebral meningitis epidemics, 25 smallpox outbreaks, 6,000 bottles of diphtheria antitoxin and enough serum to prevent 894 cases of rabies. South once estimated that through her lab she had produced enough typhoid vaccine to inoculate 12 million people.

In an interview with Pulitzer winner Marjorie Rawlings (*The Yearling*), South explained that her work was fascinating but that it required "a good many sacrifices." The key to succeeding in a man's field, she explained, was "hard work and ambition."



# Ora Porter: Warren's First Registered Nurse

*PCDN  
9/26/97*

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

In a world that segregated black and white Americans, Warren County's first registered nurse contributed mightily to the lives of both races. A native of Butler County, Ora Porter (1880-1970) and her family came to Bowling Green shortly before her tenth birthday. She attended State Street School, graduated from Tuskegee School of Nursing, received additional training at Lincoln Hospital in New York City, and then returned to Bowling Green as the county's first registered nurse.

Not permitted to work in the local segregated hospital, Porter specialized in home care and headed the list of nurses recommended by area physicians. Most of her patients were white, for few African Americans could afford her \$10 a day nursing fee. Six foot tall, "bossy," and a stickler for cleanliness in the sickroom, Porter not only provided excellent care for her patients, she set rules she expected everyone in the household to follow. Where Porter nursed, everyone tiptoed, whispered and did as she instructed. Many Warren Countians owe their good health to Porter's skills.

In addition to caring for those who needed her professional care, Porter spent much of her free time aiding area African Americans. Porter helped organize Bowling Green's Interracial Commission in 1949 (and served on its board of directors) and in 1955 was one of the founders of the George Washington Carver Center, where she taught classes in personal and public health and basic nursing care.



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

## Quality Furnishings Since 1948...

Simpson Furniture has been bringing the Bowling Green area quality furniture at irresistible prices.

We have been around for quite some time, however, our store is not the same store your grandparents shopped. For 43 years the store was located in the downtown area of College Street. In 1991, Simpson Furniture relocated to...





## Brinton B. Davis, WKU "Hillbuilder"

by: Nancy Disher Baird & Carol Crowe Carraco



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

Born in Mississippi and educated in St. Louis and New York, "Captain" Brinton Beauregard Davis (1862-1952), came to Kentucky in 1892. First in Paducah and then Louisville, he enjoyed an enviable reputation as a successful architect. Although his career was interrupted by the Spanish American War, on his return he designed the Jefferson County Armory (now Louisville Gardens) in 1905 and Bowling Green's City Hall in 1907. Two years later President Henry H. Cherry

employed Davis to design a master plan for Western's campus. Although his original plans were altered, Davis designed eleven campus structures. His buildings "on the hill" included: Van Meter Auditorium (1910), Snell Hall (1924), Heating Plant (1927), Old Stadium and Colonnade (1927), Gordon Wilson (1927), Industrial Education (1928), Schneider Hall (1928), Helm Library (1930), Craig Alumni Center (1931), Kentucky Building (1931), and Cherry Hall (1937). He also designed the Kentucky Home Life Building (1913) and the Kentucky Hotel (1925) in Louisville, plus additional structures in Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Indiana.

Brinton's first Western building, Van Meter Auditorium, pictured here, is a Classic Revival brick and native white oolithic limestone structure. Named for local businessman, Captain Charles J. Van Meter, the building features a large portico, Ionic columns, and classical ornamentation and is situated at the crest of College Hill. Now a performance hall, Van Meter once served as the university's administration and assembly building.

### *Building a Classic*

The men and women of the General Motors  
Corvette Assembly Plant are bringing you  
even more excitement this fall...





## Edgar Allen Diddle (1850-1970)

PCDN  
8/21/97

by: Nancy Disher Baird & Carol Crowe Carraco



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

One of Bowling Green-Warren County's most beloved personalities was Edgar Allen Diddle (1895-1970). Born in Adair County, "Uncle Ed" arrived in Bowling Green in 1922; hired as athletic director for Western Kentucky State Teachers College, he coached all sports including women's basketball. But it is in the area of men's basketball that his reputation rests. Between 1922 and 1964, he compiled a career record of 579 victories and 302 defeats, for an overall winning percentage of 71.5%. Waving a red towel, Diddle took his teams to ten Ohio Valley Conference championships, eight National Invitational Tournaments, and three National Collegiate Athletic Association tournaments. He was the first person to coach 1,000 basketball games at a single college, and, of course, WKU's 12,000-seat Diddle Arena is named in his honor.

Coach Diddle became a legend in his lifetime, and many area residents cannot resist telling Diddle-isms. "I want you to stand up and remain seated until I've introduced you all," he told the team; and on another occasion, he ordered the freshmen "to line up alphabetically by height." He also warned a player who used only his right hand to shoot, "all great players have to be amphibious." Although his syntax was often confused, for over forty years Ed Diddle communicated successfully and remains one of the five winningest coaches in collegiate basketball.

## Quality Furnishings Since 1948...

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## The Old Red Barn

by: Carol Crowe Carraco  
Nancy Disher Baird

Henry Hardin Cherry at Western Normal School had long been opposed to collegiate athletics, realizing that such programs were expensive and would siphon funds from his building program. However, the matter was taken out of his hands in 1920 when the General Assembly made a course in physical education compulsory for anyone receiving a teacher's certificate. The Western Normal students had long overtaxed the downtown YMCA facility, and now they would have their own gymnasium to comply with state laws as well as to compete with the state's other normal schools. As usual there were no funds. Cherry's solution was to build a temporary wooden structure behind Recitation Hall (the cite of Cherry Hall). Using mostly student carpenters, lumber "that does not have to be of the very best", and the student incidental fee fund, the structure, affectionally called the "Old Red Barn" was hastily erected. Cherry predicted that the building would suffice "except in very cold weather", and despite the installation of two

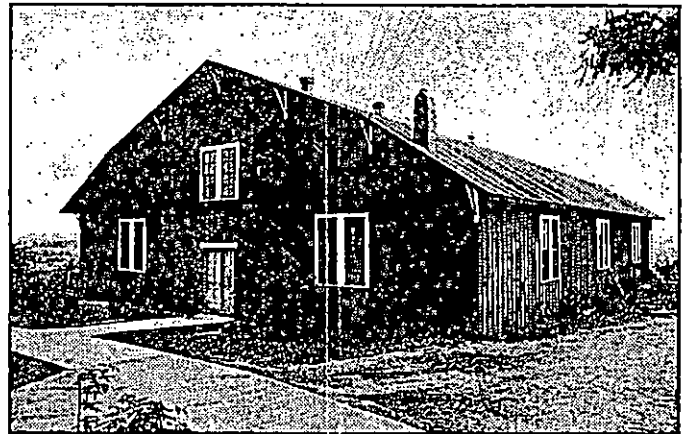


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

large stoves, he feared that wallboard would have to be added. Plumbing was too expensive, but Cherry had purchased the gymnasium equipment of the defunct Madisonville YMCA. Because of a housing shortage in 1920, forty coeds lived for several weeks in the gym; they even erected a sign, "No Man's Land." With only 250 seats, the "Old Red Barn" was obviously temporary. However, in these cramped quarters a young coach named E.A. Diddle began his climb to basketball fame.

## Laser Skin Resurfacing



*We can't turn back time, but we  
can change the way time looks on you.*



PCDN  
7/31/97

## WKU Basketball

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

Western Kentucky University's Hilltoppers basketball activities provided local newspapers with respite from war news during the late 1930s and 1940s. In the years 1937 to 1943 the team, coached by the legendary Ed Diddle, won 151 games and lost only 24, for a winning percentage of 86.3. But the highlight of this era was Western's first participation in the Metropolitan Invitational Tournament of 1942 in Madison Square Garden. At that time basketball's most prestigious tournament, it featured eight of the nation's top teams. Diddle took a squad of ten players to New York: Buck Sydnor, Tip Downing, Billy Day, Earl Shelton, Oran McKinney, Charlie Labhart, Duck Ray, Charles Reuther, Ray Blevin (#35), and future WKU President Dero Downing (#88). In Western's first game against City College of New York, Blevin's 22 points in thirteen minutes carried Western to an upset 49-46 victory. Next Creighton University fell to Western, but Western lost the third game to

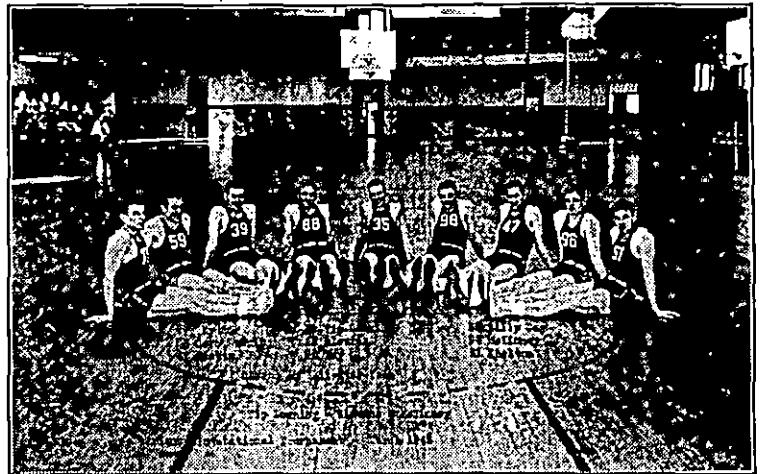
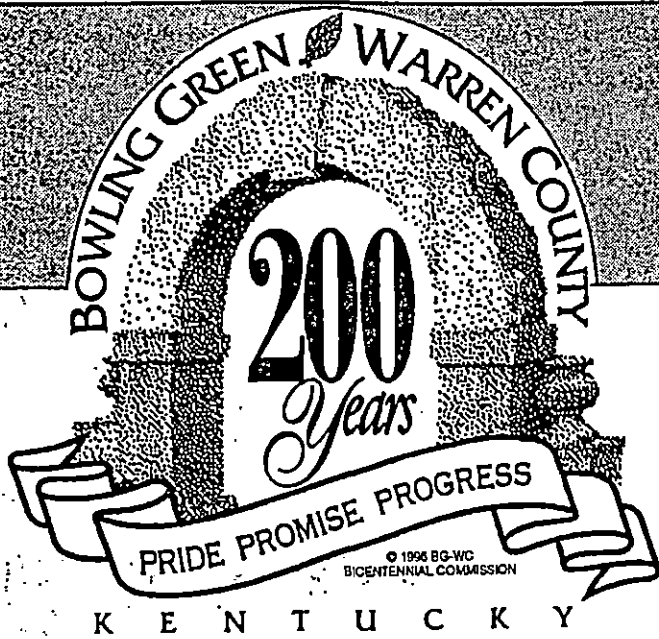


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

West Virginia University, 47-45 on two foul shots in the last seconds of the game. Three Western players made the All-Tournament Team. Waving placards, some 5,000 local fans greeted the returning players with a boisterous welcome at the L&N Depot. Films of the tournament drew two large crowds to Van Meter Auditorium and another one to the downtown Princess Theatre, with the proceeds going to the Navy Relief Fund.

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***HISTORY IN THE MAKING***



# Duncan Hines

*PADN  
6/12/97*

by: Carol Crowe Carraco  
Nancy Disher Baird



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

To many Americans Duncan Hines (1880-1959) is merely a name on a cake mix box. Few realize that in past decades his was the most trusted name in the food industry and that he was even better known than fellow Kentuckian Alben W. Barkley, who served as Vice President under Harry Truman. A Bowling Green native, Hines was a traveling salesman for a printing and advertising company in Chicago from 1905-1938. Spending much of his time on the road while calling on customers around the country, he ate in a number of mediocre cafes, as he searched for clean places to dine which served edible food. Hines dutifully recorded in his memorandum book his observations relating to the quality of the food and the ambience of the restaurant, and he often shared his observations with others. In 1935 he compiled a list of the 167 best restaurants in 30 states and mailed it with Christmas cards. The response to the list prompted the 1936 publication of ADVENTURES IN GOOD EATING, a guide to the most highly recommended U.S. restaurants. Two years later LODGING FOR A NIGHT appeared; soon a sign "Recommended by Duncan Hines" became a guide for travelers. Hines also published two cookbooks. In 1946 Hines joined Roy H. Park in establishing the Hines-Park Food Company, which produced and sold some 165 different products under the Duncan Hines label. A decade later Proctor and Gamble of Cincinnati purchased the company. Hines spent the last years of his life in his Louisville Road business headquarters-home (now Hardy & Son Funeral Home).

## FIRST AMERICAN DUNCAN HINES FESTIVAL SCHEDULE OF EVENT

### THURSDAY, JUNE 12

Miss Duncan Hines Pageant & Little Mr. & Miss Bicentennial  
Capitol Arts Center ..... 7:00 p.m.

### FRIDAY, JUNE 13

Fountain Square Park Evening ..... 5:00 p.m.  
Sponsored by the Gator G-107  
Poster Contest Winners ..... 5:30 p.m.

### SATURDAY, JUNE 14

Duncan Hines Presentation  
Kentucky Museum ..... 10:00 a.m.  
Family Activities, Food and Fun!  
Kentucky Museum Moose Lodge-Richardsville Road. 10:00 a.m.  
Kids Duck on the River  
11:45 a.m.

Local entertainment will take two separate stages.

BUD LIGHT SOUND STAGE ..... 2:30 p.m.  
"SHOWTIME" - Magic Show, Juggling, Unicyclist. Sponsored by Jim Johnson Pontiac-Nissan-Mitsubishi.

GREAVES AND PACE - Country Music  
5:30 p.m.  
Sponsored by Thumbprint Design



# Adventures In Good Eating

by: Carol Crowe Carraco  
Nancy Disher Baird

PCDN  
6/9/97

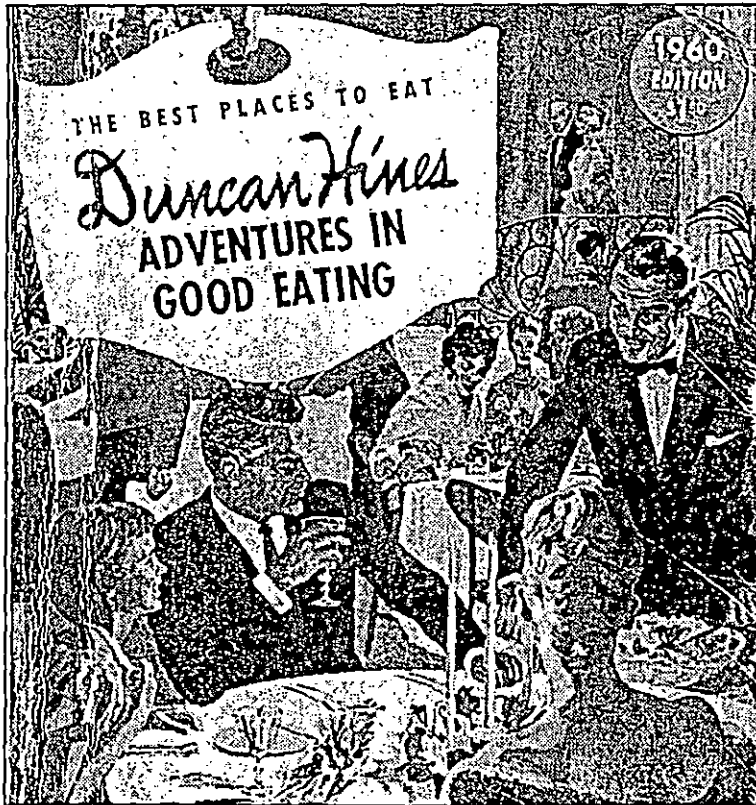


Illustration from the Kentucky Library

Bowling Green native, restaurant and lodging guide, and cookbook author, Duncan Hines (1880-1959) published his first book, ADVENTURES IN GOOD EATING, in 1936. Hailed as the nation's first guide to incorporate "respectability and integrity", it became the travelers trusted friend as it went through some 50 reprints. Hines snubbed all offers of advertising and fiercely guarded not only his independence but his anonymity. He often made reservations under an assumed name and in the early days "frontspiced his books with a 20-year old photograph of himself as a nutty young blade." Hines later said, "I have never accepted a free meal or any other consideration from any inn." Nor did he list any restaurant which refused to allow him to inspect its kitchen. The American public developed an almost instant affinity for Duncan Hines. He wanted cleanliness, good food, and excellent service—just as they did. A 1950s edition of ADVENTURES lists only two Bowling Green restaurants worthy of his approval. They were Parakeet Inn at 438 Main Street and Pick'n Chick'n on the 31-W By-Pass at Lehman Avenue. Perhaps Duncan Hines' reputation is best depicted in a 1940s cartoon found by his recent biographer, Loui Hatchett. The scene is the dining room of an elegant four star restaurant where a waiter has accidentally spilled an entire tray of food on a customer. As the angry victim tries to control his rage, the man's indignant wife says to the waiter, "Just wait 'till Duncan Hines hears about this!"

## The First Ever - First American DUNCAN HINES FESTIVAL

presented by the Bowling Green Junior Women's Club

THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 1997

1. Miss Duncan Hines Pageant and Little Mr. and Miss

SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 1997

1. Uncle Duncan's Duck Dive with "The Duck" to do live



# WW II *PCDN 9/10/97* HOMEFRONT

by: Carol Crowe Carraco & Nancy Disher Baird

Military conflicts in Europe and Asia in the late 1930s changed the tempo of life in Warren County, and by the outbreak of WWII on December 7, 1941, volunteer groups had already mobilized. Merchants provided space for collecting and packaging handmade socks, scarves, sweaters, and rolled bandages. The Bowling Green-Warren County Victory Club distributed collection boxes and organized a door-to-door canvass to collect money for the nation's war effort. War mothers established a canteen at the railroad depot and operated a USO on weekends at the American Legion Hall. Red Cross blood drives netted more than the area quotas. Parades, guest speakers--included WWI hero Sergeant Alvin York, and rallies accompanied bond drives, and civic and social groups from one end of the county to the other challenged each other to see who could collect the most. "Get into the scrap and get the scrap in" was the theme for many of the collection drives. A



The area women pictured here are folding and packing handmade items for overseas distributions. Can anyone identify the cherubic child?

piece of scrap metal served as a free pass the Saturday movie matinees, and school children competed to collect whatever would help the war effort. Rationing encouraged area residents to walk instead of ride and to raise a victory garden and can vegetables and fruits. Everyone made sacrifices in time, money, or lives. Of the 3600 Warren Countians who served in the armed forces, 130 died.

## Attention All PTAs, PTOs, Parent Groups, Bands, Sports Teams, Etc.!

JCPenney has designated a benefit and shopping day to help your school.

This is an excellent opportunity to raise thousands of dollars by selling \$5 admittance tickets to JCPenney's

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One of a series of stories sponsored by area businesses and organizations in support and celebration of our long heritage.



# The Hilltoppers

by: Nancy Disher Baird  
Carol Crowe Carraco

PCDN  
8/8/97



Illustration from the Kentucky Library

Do you remember "Trying," "P.S. I Love You," "From the Vine Came the Grape," "Till Then," and other smooth oldies? Then, of course, you recall the 1950s Hilltoppers quartet, Don McGuire, Jimmy Sacca, Seymour Speigelman, and Billy Vaughn. Their big break—a television appearance—came on October 26, 1952, when they sang "Trying," their first release, on Ed Sullivan's "Toast of the Town." The four Western students wore freshmen beanies, "rat hats" and college seaters with a large "W" on the front. They also appeared on "American Bandstand" and on shows hosted by Milton Berle, Perry Como, and Steve Allen. The Hilltoppers saw 21 recordings reach Billboard's Top 40 status during their 11 years together. Ranked as the No. 1 musical groups during 1953 and 1954, they remained one of the country's "Top 10" groups through 1960.

However, the late 50s brought a change in musical trends, and the Hilltoppers' soft style gave way to rock and roll. Don McGuire and Billy Vaughn left the group by 1960 to be replaced by Eddie Crowe and Doug Cordoza. By 1963 the group disbanded. Jimmy Saca and three new members reorganized the group in 1968 and toured the country through the 1970s singing the original hits.

IF YOU'RE  
BUILDING OR REMODELING  
YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS, CONSIDER THIS...  
IN THE BOWLING GREEN/WARREN COUNTY AREA,