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## Landmark Report (Vol. 15, no. 1)

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# LANDMARK REPORT

OF BOWLING GREEN & WARREN COUNTY

VOL. 15, NO. 1

## A STROLL DOWN LAPSEY LANE

By Thomas N. Moody and Jerre Nelson Fitts



▼  
**THE SEARCY HOME AS IT APPEARED IN 1966 WITH ITS PROUD PORTICO, CONSISTING OF SIX DORIC COLUMNS, A FULL ENTABLATURE AND AN ENGAGING BALUSTRADE.**

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF KENTUCKY LIBRARY, WKU

In researching the history of Bowling Green's Presbyterian Church for its 175th anniversary, several interesting facts and some bits of folklore emerged about Lapsley Hall (razed around 1912) and the Searcy home found on Lapsley Lane. This property was most recently owned by Judge Francis Reynolds and is currently owned by the Bowling

Green/Warren County Airport Board. The Searcy home is located on the site of the original Lapsley Hall, home of Joseph B. Lapsley the first pastor of the Bowling Green Presbyterian Church.

Lapsley and his second wife Sarah Woods Lapsley acquired this land from James Rumsey Skiles in 1822. It is unclear if the brick house later known as Lapsley Hall was already on the property. Latter-day historians may never know. The source of two traditions relating to Lapsley Hall is most likely author Eliza Calvert Hall. Hall was known locally as Eliza Calvert Obenchain, a devout Presbyterian herself. She was the granddaughter of the Reverend Samuel Wilson Calvert (builder of the present Presbyterian church) and wife of William Alexander Obenchain (second president of Ogden College).

By inference in a chapter titled "The House That Was a Wedding Fee" from her 1909 novel *The Land of Long Ago*, she indicates that "Squire Schuyler" (based on James Rumsey

*Continued on page 2*

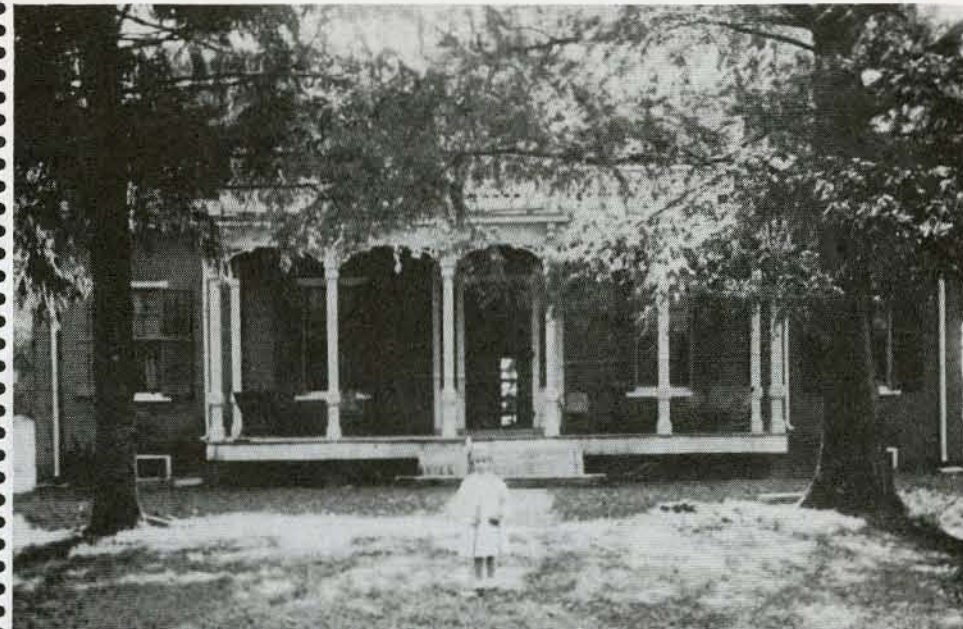
## FEATURE ARTICLE:

*Continued from page one—*

Skiles) built or presented a home (modeled after Lapsley Hall) to "Brother Samuel Wilson" (patterened after her grandfather)—a handsome gift for performing a wedding. The other presistent tradition is that Thomas Jefferson drew the plans for Lapsley Hall, an idea which Hall popularized in the same story.

One photograph (pictured here) of the house does exist; prominent in it is a Victorian porch, most likely a later addition. The basic structure appears to have had a central hall with a room on either side, a pattern of the area's Greek Revival structures. One can detect windows atop and on each side of the front door (the side panels are arched). The shuttered main windows are six-over-six construction. Lapsley Hall was razed in the early 1900s after the Searcy family suffered from typhoid fever and was advised by a physician that damp and crumbling walls were the culprit.

The present house (pictured on page one) was built around 1912 on the stone foundation of Lapsley Hall (editor's note: the house features several characteristic of Creedmore Fleenor's other work in Bowling Green, although there is no documentary evidence of this supposition). The present house does contain some salvaged materials from the original house including cross and Bible doors and a handsomely decorated



THE ORIGINAL LAPSEY HALL, EARLY 1900S

Adamesque mantel. The Searcy home is a colonial revival behemoth with a large columned portico and beautiful entrance with sidelights and graceful fanlight. The portico is crowned with a large central dormer. Large windows have limestone sills and lentils. The rear section of the house boats a gambrel roof. A few remaining trees hint at the alley of elms which long overarched the lane from Scotsville Road to the house. On the front lawn stands an ancient dogwood, a reminder of Skiles and Lapsley ownership. Sadly missing from the garden is the legendary Sarah Woods Lapsley rose. Several descendants have recorded the story of a fine-leaved plant with small white blossoms which was alleged to have traveled with the family from

Scotland and later flourished in Virginia and Kentucky. Of what illness or accident Joseph B. Lapsley died, perhaps no person will ever know. He was originally laid to rest at the farm; in 1863, his remains were taken to Bowling Green and placed in the old public burying ground where his church had stood. The epitaph on his tomb reads: "Sacred to the memory of Rev. Joseph B. Lapsley pastor of the Bowling Green Presbeterian (sic) Church. He here lies in death beneath the spot over which stood the pulpit occupied by him in life. His memory will live in the hearts of his people. Born Oct. 3rd 1779, died in the triumph of faith Sept. 25th 1823."

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS:

### What is the Bowling Green Historic Preservation Board?

BY JANET L. JOHNSTON

In 1980, the United States Congress enacted the National Historic Preservation Amendment Act and created a certified local government program. This program established a federal-state-local partnership in historic preservation. Subsequently the Kentucky General Assembly adopted Kentucky Revised Statute 82.026 that enabled city-wide commissions to participate in the Certified Local Government Program. The City of Bowling Green is a certified local government and works with the Kentucky Heritage Council in local historic preservation efforts.

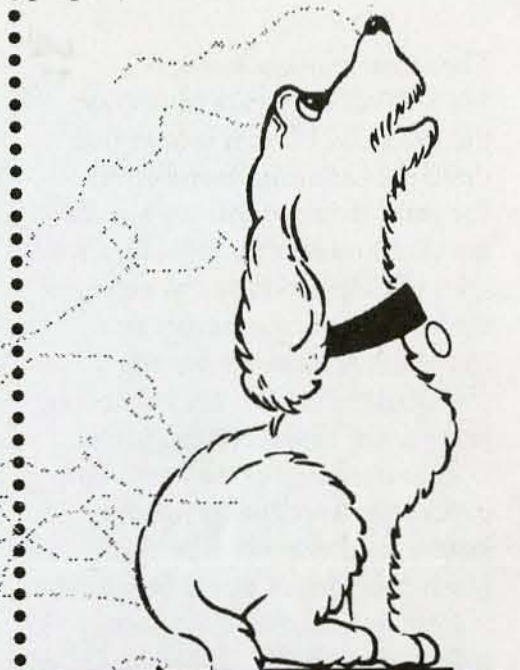
Local historic preservation efforts were strengthened when the City of Bowling Green and Warren County Fiscal Court created the Bowling Green Historic Preservation Board. The Board consists of five citizen members appointed by the mayor. Appointments are based on an individual's interest, training, or experience in historic preservation. The Board members for fiscal year 1994-1995 are: Mike Reynolds (Chairman), Jean Thomason, Jonathan Jeffrey, Dr. Raymond Cravens, and John Perkins. Board meetings are open to the public.

*The duties and responsibilities of the Board are:*

- Conducting and maintaining a survey of historic buildings and areas.
- Drafting a historic preservation plan.
- Recommending historic district and individual landmark designations.
- Regulating changes to designated property through Certificates of Appropriateness. Any property owner in a local historic district who undertakes alternations visible to the public, new construction, demolition, or relocation must secure the approval of the Board.
- Soliciting nominations for the National Register of Historic Places.
- Working in the federal, state, local partnership established by the Certified Local Government program; providing technical assistance to historic property owners or other groups interested in historic preservation, federal tax credits or local tax abatements for rehabilitation; providing education programs; and initiating plans for preservation and rehabilitation.

The Board employs one staff member, and its office is located at the City-Planning Commission, 1141 State Street. The phone number is (502) 842-1953. The Board welcomes inquiries about historic preservation and provides

technical assistance and educational programs to organizations and private property owners.



## Landmark Flea Market

April 29, 1995  
8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
L&N Depot Grounds

Volunteer workers are needed and shoppers welcome. Individuals may set up booths for a \$20 fee.

A portion of the proceeds will go to the depot restoration fund. If you have items to donate please contact the Landmark Office at 782-0037.

## ACTIVITIES & EVENTS:

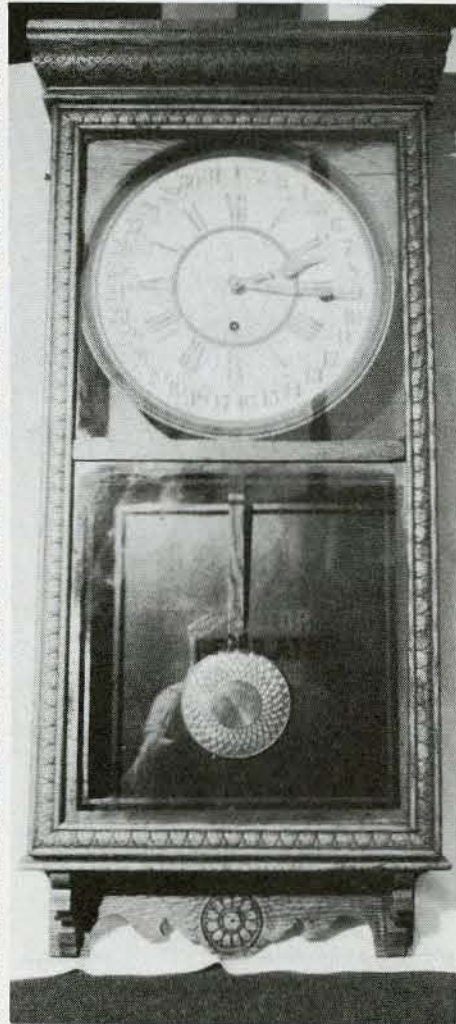
### Landmark Makes A Timely Donation

The recent announcement of a \$765,000 ISTEA grant to renovate the 1925 L&N Depot is news that thrills the Landmark membership. For years, the depot has been at the top of our most endangered list. In a spirit of cooperation and as a token of the building's bright future, the Landmark Association recently presented the original clock that hung in the depot to Operation PRIDE. Upon completion of the restoration, the clock will reclaim its rightful location in the depot. The clock which many feared would be sold out of town was purchased at a local consignment shop.

The clock is a Sessions Regulator clock that was featured in the Sears Roebuck Catalog of 1924 at a price of \$18. The clock boasts a handsome oak case surrounded with incised decorative motifs featuring egg and dart molding. Each egg has a star incised in it. The dial face features the typical Roman numeral hour designations and an outer dial that indicated the day of the month. The pendulum has a lovely sunburst brass weight.

In expressing her appreciation, Operation PRIDE director Kathy Curtis called the clock "a beautiful piece of history" that "will take its old place back on the wall of the depot." Landmark looks forward to the

dedication of a renovated depot. The 1925 dedication drew over 5,000 in a downpour. The renovation project reflects the initial spirit that raised the building in the first place.



### SPECIAL THANKS TO...

...**MATT AND MARGARET BAKER** for opening up their home for the Christmas Open House; it was our best attended ever.

...**JONATHAN RAY** for orchestrating the lovely refreshments at the Open House.

...**SMITHS GROVE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH** for allowing us to hold our February meeting in their building.

...**SMITHS GROVE WOMENS CLUB** for providing the refreshments for the above.

...the **AD AGENCY** for designing the eye-catching posters that you have seen around the square advertising our publications for sale. The enclosed blue flyer is a smaller reproduction of the poster.

...**BRENT PRICE** of PeachTree Marketing for his continued work on our newsletter.

...to the volunteer writers who have provided articles for our last few newsletters.

...to **CHERYL MENDENHALL** who has consistently promoted Landmark and helps keep our office maintained.

# Learn about BOWLING GREEN'S ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE FROM LANDMARK ASSOCIATION'S BOOKS:

- ◆ *A Stroll Around Fountain Square* ~ \$3.75
- ◆ *Architecture of Warren County, Kentucky* ~ \$6.00
- ◆ *An Album of Early Warren County Landmarks* ~ \$15.00
- ◆ *Riverview: Savoring the Past* ~ \$3.00

AVAILABLE AROUND FOUNTAIN SQUARE, AT:

BOWLING GREEN ANTIQUE MALL

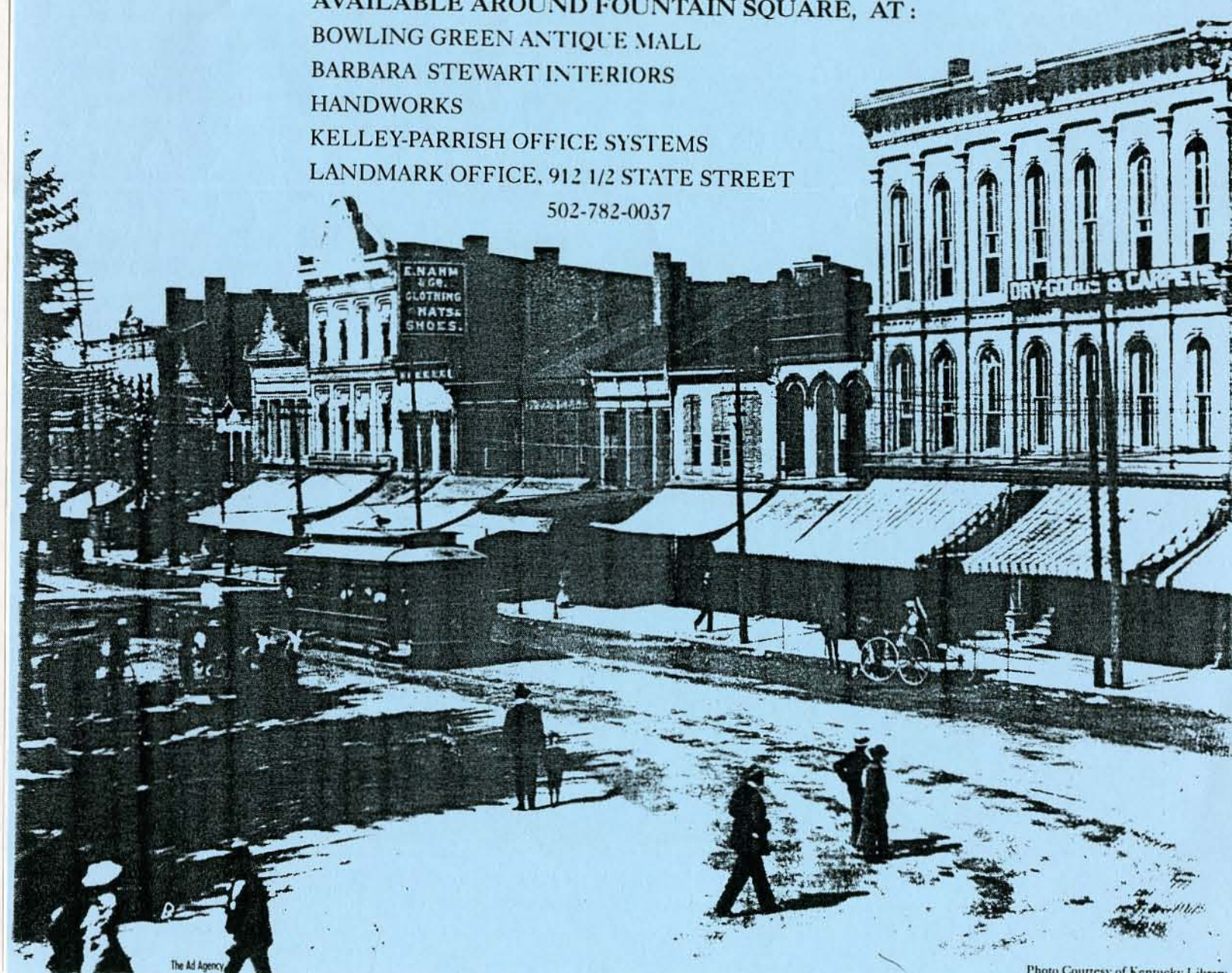
BARBARA STEWART INTERIORS

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502-782-0037



The Ad Agency

Photo Courtesy of Kentucky Library

# HISTORIC PROPERTIES ADVERTISING



**1245 STATE STREET**  
THIS LOVELY BRICK HOME, when built circa 1900, featured 4 large bedrooms, parlor-library, formal dining room, beautiful living room with fireplace. French doors surrounded by beautiful woodwork. Needs work but could be breathtaking. \$114,900.

**Mike or Elinor Salsman.**  
843-0604 or 782-2250  
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**BRICK COLONIAL**  
IN GLASGOW, THIS SUBSTANTIAL BRICK was built in 1850s. Main living area has 4 bedrooms, 2 baths. Mother-in-law suite consists of living and dining room, 1 bedroom and bath. 5 fireplaces, 2 car garage. \$110,000.

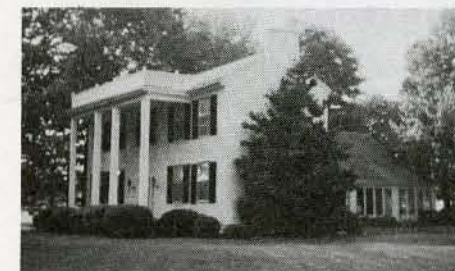
**Lisa Lancaster**  
622-3033 or 782-2250  
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**A TREASURE OF YESTERYEAR**  
DISPLAY YOUR ANTIQUES PROUDLY in this older home with old-fashioned space and grace. This charming home has central heat and air, two full baths, hardwood floors, transoms, and wide porch. Call Peggy Hunt at 781-2172 to see this timeless beauty priced at \$94,500.

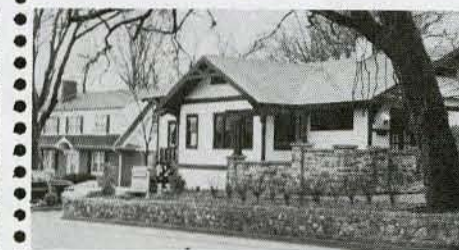


**RE/MAX**  
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**COLONIAL HOME - AUBURN**  
ANTEBELLUM COLONIAL HOME, situated on 2.65 acres. This historical Shaker sugar maple home consists of formal living and dining rooms, kitchen, library, 3 bedrms, 2 baths. \$110,000.

**Lisa Lancaster**  
622-3033 or 782-2250  
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**1551 CHESTNUT STREET**  
A CLASSIC CRAFTSMAN SYTLE RESIDENCE conveniently close to WKU campus, downtown and the ByPass. Potential rental income from basement apartment. More than 2,000 square feet.

**Tom Baker**  
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PRESERVATION . . . PLAN ON IT

MISS SARA TYLER  
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

LANDMARK ASSOCIATION  
P.O. Box 1812  
BOWLING GREEN, KY 42102-1812

## COMING EVENTS

TOUR OF BOWLING GREEN'S ALABASTER CITY ..... SATURDAY, APRIL 22  
10AM-11:30PM, FAIRVIEW CEMETERY CHAPEL

LANDMARK FLEA MARKET ..... SATURDAY, APRIL 29  
8AM-3PM, L&N DEPOT GROUNDS

LANDMARK ANNUAL MEETING ..... THURSDAY, JUNE 1  
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

## LANDMARK REPORT

Is a publication of the Landmark Association of Bowling Green and Warren County, Inc., a nonprofit corporation organized to promote historic preservation/economic development. Landmark is supported by the membership of concerned citizens.

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Bowling Green, KY  
42102  
502-782-0037

LANDMARK  
REPORT

Designed by:  
Brent Price,  
PeachTree Marketing  
781-4186

