

ANTIQUA MAP GIVES VIEW  
OF CITY, COUNTY IN '77

A glimpse of Bowling Green and Warren County, as they appeared 82 years ago in 1877, is provided by an antique map rescued from the oblivion of a long forgotten nook in a Porter Pike farm home.

Robert Petty found the multi-colored map while removing a petition in the two-story frame house where he has lived since 1945. Before that, Petty's grandfather, the late S.S. Hunt had made his home there in Gott community.

Petty said the map, measuring almost five feet by four feet, was neatly rolled when located in the attic of the house near a chimney. Petty said he had no explanation for the map's presence.

Besides being in remarkably good state of preservation, the map contains the names of every landowner in Warren County in 1877, information that must have been gathered with some difficulty even then when the county was home for 21,742 persons.

Backed by cloth like an expensive sailing chart, the map is only slightly frayed at the edges, leaving whatever information it has unlocked and exposed to its examiners.

The chart was a product of the D. G. Beers and Co., of Philadelphia which hastened to assure that the map was made "from new and actual surveys."

Lists of "business notices" set at the map's borders hint that it may have been an advertising venture of the period. Quickly scanning the notices, an observer finds:

A physician and surgeon residing at Eristow. His name, Dr. J. H. Pansy.

Many citizens who called themselves farmers and traders, probably indicating that a farmer had to be a competent trader, too, in those days of barter, or he would lose out.

The Rev. A.C. Dickerson was listed as a farmer and pastor of the 2nd Presbyterian Church. Another man was listed as a farmer and justice of the peace, a mighty handy combination any day and age.

D. W. Middleton of Oakland not only farmed, but prided himself in breeding "fast trotting horses."

H. Potter was a "distiller of hard-made sour mash copper distilled whisky," not to mention apple and peach, brandy. He lived in Bowling Green.

John A. Robinson was captain of the steamboat "Bowling Green" and superintendent of the Green and Barren River Navigation Co. The company maintained offices and what appear to be warehouses, on Gordon Avenue near the boatlanding.

Livery stables are on the Bowling Green map along with the Green River Handle Works located where the True Temper corporation is today on Potter Street.

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Bowling Green Stave an Heading Factory and another axe handle plant were located in Delafield community near the river.

Not nearly so crowded with sub-standard rental housed as it is today, Delafield community was comparatively highly industrialized.

Besides the stave factory, axe handle works and navigation company warehouses, Delafield contained:

E. C. Claypool's Double Spring Distillery, G. Lehman's lime Kiln, a slaughterhouse, a Portage Railroad connecting the bustling Bowling Green waterfront with the L & N Railroad yards.

The 1870 census has set Bowling Green population at 7,235 of which 6,778 were classed as natives and 457 as foreign. Of the total, the city's Negro community had 2,746 citizens.

The area now known as Hobson Grove and the subject of a city condemnation suit tomorrow in Warren Circuit Court was even in 1877 the property of the W. E. Hobson family.

Lehman's Beer Garden was in full swing back in 77 about where 10th Street and Laurel Avenue now intersect. It was probably a gathering place for gay blades of the day.

Across the street from the beer garden, the Warren County Agricultural Grounds stretched south to the present intersection of Broadway and Laurel.

These were the days when the famed Warren County Fair packed them in from as far away as Louisville and Nashville. Visible on the map is a circular pavilion seating 8,000. It was covered and provided a good view of the racing course. Horse racing was a major attraction of the early fairs.

In those day's the Scottsville Pike left Bowling Green along the present route of the Cemetery Road. Today's U.S. 231, running toward Scottsville, was known as Row's Mill Road.

Shifting to the political scene, the entire city of Bowling Green and adjacent territory south of Barren River, voted in Bowling Green Precinct No. 1. The city itself was divided into three wards.

In all, there were nine precincts in Warren County. Besides B. G. No. 1, they included:

Goshen No. 2, the southeast; Rich Pond No. 3, south of the city precinct; Rockfield No. 4, southwest of the city; Hadley, No. 5, northwest of the city; Greencastle No. 6, north of the city; Bristow No 7, northeast of the city;

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Smiths Grove No. 8, east of the city, and Woodburn, No. 9, in the southernmost part of the county.

Names of county officers on the map include E. H. Mottley, sheriff, James D. Hines, circuit clerk, and J. W. Valentine, jailer.

Moving into communities surrounding Bowling Green, the map lists J. L. Wright as Smiths Grove police judge and S. R. Torry as constable and bookkeeper.

The Smiths Grove public well was located at 1st and Main streets with another watering place, Wright and Claypool's Saloon nearby.

H. W. Sanders operated a tanyard and W. H. Beck was president of Smiths Grove College.

At Oakland there was a huge tobacco warehouse and Oakland Academy.

Moving south, Woodburn nestled next to the L & N Railroad and had a hotel run by a family named Johnson.

Rockfield was located on the Memphis branch of the L & N with a depot and two stores. Two doctors lived there.

There was another grove in Warren County besides Smiths Grove in '77. It was Rich Pond Grove with later was shortened to just Rich Pond.

Professor B. F. Rogers' school was located at Rich Pond. Two residents of the two were C. A. Skiles and J. A. Chapman. Hazell and Eugena streets were included in the small town's layout.

There are only a few of the many interesting facts to be gleaned from the map found by Petty. The list of property owners deserves a study all its own.

It reads like a Bowling Green and Warren County "who's who" of 1877. Lumped together are the city and county property owners, some great, some near great, others only average citizens.

But they all were a part of Bowling Green's growing up. Their problems and deeds lend a sometimes needed perspective to community on the move toward a promising future.