



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
Antique Maps Inc.**

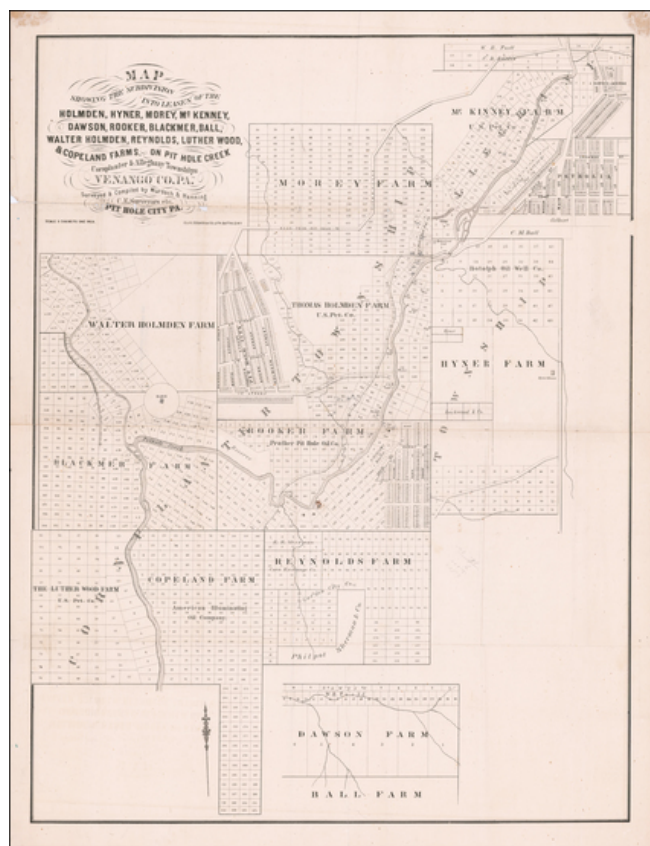
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**(Oil) Map Showing The Subdivision Into Leases of the Holmden, Hyner, Morey, McKenney, Dawson, Rooker, Blackmer, Ball, Walter Holmden, Reynolds, Luther Wood, & Copeland Farms. On Pit Hole Creek Cornplanter & Alleghany Townships Venango Co. PA. Surveyed & Compiled by Murdoch & Hanning C.E. Surveyors etc. Pit Hole City PA.**

**Stock#:** 59416  
**Map Maker:** Clay, Cosack & Co. Lith.  
**Date:** 1865 circa  
**Place:** Buffalo  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** Good  
**Size:** 25 x 33 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



**Description:**

***One of the First American Oil Booms - and the Site of John Wilkes Booth's Failed Investment in Oil and the World's First Oil Pipeline.***

Rare separately published map illustrating the available lands which in and around Pit Hole Creek, following the discovery of oil in the region.

The lands illustrated are among the earliest oil leases in the Pit Hole Creek area.

Oil was discovered on Pit Hole Creek on January 12, 1861, but very little seems to have happened in the next few years. *The Pittsburgh Daily Commercial* notes a new well being struck on the McMahon Farm in



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the September 17, 1864 edition. The first mention of Oil on the lands shown on the map was the discovery of oil on the Holmden Farm in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, on January 11, 1865.

Oil Companies noted on the map include:

- U.S Petroleum Co.
- Botolph Oil Well Co.
- Prather Pit Hole Oil Co.
- American Illuminating Oil Co.

### **John Wilkes Booth**

This map also shows the site of one of John Wilkes Booth's oil investments. The American Oil & Gas Historical Society provides [an in-depth write up on his involvement in Pennsylvania oil](#):

*By June of 1864, Booth had invested another \$1,000 of his now substantially diminished cash for a 1/30 share in a Boston Oil Well Company lease (later Botolph Oil & Mining Company) on Hyner farm of Pithole Creek.*

*Meanwhile, the Dramatic Oil Company's Wilhelmina well was producing about 25 barrels of oil daily - but was beset with problems and mounting costs. Booth and his partners finally determined that "shooting" their well could increase its production. At the time, this technique required that a large quantity of black powder be detonated deep in the well.*

*Successful shooting would fragment an oil-bearing formation and enable far more oil to be extracted from the well. Booth and his partners gambled. They lost. "The well was 'shot' with explosives to increase production, reported Thomas Mears' son Frank. "Instead of accomplishing that, the blast utterly ruined the hole and the well never yielded another drop."*

*John Wilkes Booth's dreams of Pennsylvania oil wealth abruptly and permanently collapsed. He had lost over \$6,000 in the Wilhelmina well. Booth left the oil region in July 1864 - no longer the wealthy entrepreneur he had been just 18 months earlier.*

*A few weeks later, Booth checked into Baltimore's Barnum Hotel. In this hotel, the Lincoln conspiracy first began to take shape with Booth's boyhood friends and former Confederate soldiers,*



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*Michael O'Laughlen and Samuel B. Arnold.*

*Over the next eight months, the plan would evolve from kidnapping to assassination, culminating in Ford's Theater on April 14, 1865, when Booth assassinated President Abraham Lincoln. His own life ended with a bullet when the Union cavalry caught up with him 12 days later, about 60 miles south of Washington, D.C.*

*Two months after John Wilkes Booth's death, a large discovery occurs on the Hyner farm of Pithole Creek. The "Homestead Well" will yield 500 barrels of oil a day - and makes many fortunes.*

*History is left to wonder what path Booth and the nation might have taken, had only his venture into Pennsylvania's booming oilfields succeeded.*

### **World's First Oil Pipeline**

In 1865, Samuel Van Syckel's newly formed Oil Transportation Association put into service a two-inch iron line linking the Frazier well (illustrated on this map) to the Miller Farm Oil Creek Railroad Station - about five miles away.

"The day that the Van Syckel pipe-line began to run oil a revolution began in the business. After the Drake well it is the most important event in the history of the Oil Regions," noted Ida Tarbell in her *History of the Standard Oil Company*.

### **Dating The Map**

While the map is undated, the lithographer, Clay, Cosack & Co., first advertised lithography services in *The Buffalo Commercial* on August 7, 1865.

The map is first referenced in 1867 in a Pennsylvania Supreme Court Case entitled *The Warren and Franklin Railway Company v. The Clarion Land and Improvement Company, Eastern District of Pennsylvania*, where it was referenced in a land dispute.

### **Rarity**

OCLC locates a single example in the Erie County Historical Society.



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**Provenance:** Ex Rochester Historical Society. Purchased at auction in December 2018.

**Detailed Condition:**

Ex Rochester Historical Society, with stamps on verso. Old tape repairs and pencil notes on verso, Some staining in upper blank corners.