



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard  
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## (First Printed Map of Milwaukee) City of Milwaukee

**Stock#:** 71024  
**Map Maker:** Kilbourn / Haviland / Lapham  
**Date:** 1836  
**Place:** Cincinnati  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 21 x 20.5 inches  
**Price:** \$ 9,500.00



### Description:

***The Exceptionally Rare First Printed Map of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Unseen on the Market Since 1934.***

An important American map, being the first printed map of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, executed by Increase Lapham and Byron Kilbourn in 1835-36, and engraved by W. Haviland in Cincinnati in 1836. The map is a wonderful rarity whose story is intertwined with the founding and early controversies of that important American town. It has not appeared on the market in over 80 years.

When this map was made, the nascent Milwaukee (not yet formally founded as such) was comprised of three small towns: Kilbourntown (founded by Byron Kilbourn) on the west side of the Milwaukee River; Juneautown (founded by Solomon Juneau) between Lake Michigan and the Milwaukee River, and Walker's Point (founded by George H. Walker) south of the Milwaukee and Menomonee Rivers. Our enterprising surveyor Byron Kilbourn was a land promoter first and an honest mapmaker second; it did not suit his commercial interests to promote Juneautown and Walker's Point alongside his Kilbourntown, so, despite the fact that those settlements very much existed and would have been covered by his map, there is no mention of them whatsoever. What's more, in his inset map "Environs of Milwaukee", Kilbourn indicates that large parts of Juneautown and Walker's Point were swampland. Apparently, when steamboat captains delivered passengers to the docks of Kilbourntown, Kilbourn had instructed their captains to tell the



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passengers that Juneautown was an Indian trading post.

Through this map, Kilbourn is generally seen as disregarding the street layout of Juneautown and thus laying the foundation for what would become the Milwaukee Bridge War of 1845.

#### **The Milwaukee Bridge War of 1845**

The streets in Kilbourn's map are somewhat offset from what existed in Juneautown. The effects of this can be seen on modern maps of downtown Milwaukee, where the streets on the east and west sides of the river do not match up. This became a major issue in 1840 when the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature ruled the city's ferry network inadequate for the growing city and ordered a bridge to be built. By 1844 a total of four bridges had been built across the Milwaukee River. Three of the bridges (at Chestnut, Oneida, and North Water) were opposed by Kilbourn as they encumbered water access to his docks.

On May 3rd, 1845, a schooner crashed into the bridge at Spring Street, which had been supported by Kilbourn and the West Ward. Rumors spread among the East Ward residence that Kilbourn had arranged for the accident to happen. The West Warders then took it upon themselves to destroy the Chestnut Street bridge (support by Juneau and his faction), which they called a nuisance to water traffic. After the West Warders collapsed the western section of the Chestnut Bridge, East Warders gathered weaponry, including an old cannon, and brought them to bear on the west bank. Before they fired on the west bank, word spread that Kilbourn's young daughter had just died and cooler heads prevailed.

The rivalry that had built for ten years, in many ways starting with this map, dissipated over the remainder of 1845, and, in 1846, plans for three new bridges were drawn up. On January 31st, 1846 a city charter was drawn up and the City of Milwaukee was officially incorporated.

#### **A Note on Authorship and the Production of the Map**

The map is varyingly credited to two of Milwaukee's founders, Byron Kilbourn and Increase Lapham. In reality, it was probably a joint effort of the two; begun in 1835 by Byron Kilbourn with additional help from Lapham upon the latter's arrival in the area on July 4th, 1836 (three days before Wisconsin became a territory).

Wisconsin Historical provides the following overview of Increase Lapham and his arrival in Wisconsin:

*A self-educated engineer and naturalist, Increase Lapham was Wisconsin's first scientist and one of its foremost citizens. He wrote the first book published in Wisconsin, made the first accurate maps of the state, investigated Wisconsin's effigy mounds, native trees and grasses, climatic patterns and*



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*geology, and helped found many of the schools, colleges and other cultural institutions that still enrich the state today...*

*Early in 1836 Lapham received an invitation from his former employer, Byron Kilbourn, to come to Milwaukee. Ten years before, Lapham had worked under Kilbourn on the engineering crew of the Miami Canal. Kilbourn had recently begun speculating in Wisconsin and believed that the construction of the Milwaukee and Rock River Canal would allow Milwaukee to become the pre-eminent lakeshore city. Lapham accepted Kilbourn's offer to become chief engineer and arrived in Milwaukee on July 1, 1836.*

There is some possibility that the map was engraved in Cincinnati but printed in Milwaukee; in local newspapers, Kilbourn is recorded as having a printing business set up in Milwaukee in 1836.

#### **Later Commentary**

Werner Hegemann writing in *City Planning for Milwaukee* (1916) said the following of the map:

##### *Milwaukee's First City Plan: 1835*

*This brings us right to Milwaukee's own problems. City planning is by no means anything like a new thought, foreign to the development of this city. City planning was practiced in Milwaukee from the very beginning of the town, i.e., from the year 1835. At that time Mr. Byron Kilbourne [sic], a surveyor from the East, came to the site which to-day is the City of Milwaukee, and made the first city plan. The principles and ideas that guided him in his planning are laid down in a somewhat condensed form in the first map ever printed of the "City of Milwaukee, engraved by W. Haviland, Cincinnati" in the year 1836. There the explanations are given...*

*"Streets running North and South from Water Street to Third Street inclusive, are 80 feet wide. Streets parallel with Third Street and West of it are 70 feet wide. Cross streets East and West 80 feet wide. Alleys 20 feet wide. Lots 50 feet wide by 150 feet long. Water lots 40 feet by 120 feet. Out lots 160 feet by 210 feet. Block No. 24, appropriated for Court House. The four spaces marked Public, are set apart for public grounds."*

*The Comprehensive City Planning Program of 1835.*

*The explanation as given on this map of 1836 therefore contains a comprehensive city planning program: it designates streets of various widths as the means of land communication and transportation and specially shaped water lots as terminals of water transportation; it sets aside the*



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*public grounds as secured in the shape of four open spaces; it determines business areas, housing areas with private gardens made possible by urban lots of ample size and much larger lots on the outskirts (outlets). The civic center idea also finds its expression in the setting aside of suitable grounds for a Court House. What Mr. Kilbourne [sic] tried to bring about in the year 1835 was exactly what city planning must achieve to-day, namely, the co-ordination and the harmonizing of all the various factors that together determine the make up of a city map; i.e., freight and passenger transportation, accommodations for business, housing and recreation and the dignified expression of the civic needs in a civic center. The only difference is that the task of the modern city planning is much more complicated and involved than it was 100 years ago.*

#### **Rarity**

The map is exceptionally rare, as one might expect given the context of its initial production. There is some confusion among the OCLC records, with most entries seeming to relate to a positive photostat that was produced by Wisconsin Historical Society. The map after which that copy was made then either given to the AGS Library or a positive photostat was given to the library. There is also one or possibly two examples in the Milwaukee County Central Library Rare Reference Collection. All told, it seems that there is one or two, and at most three examples in institutional collections.

The map has not appeared on the market since 1934 when it was sold by Anderson Galleries in New York:

*This is probably the first engraved plan of Milwaukee. The city was first platted and named Milwaukee by Messrs. Juneau and Martin in 1835, the first sale of lots taking place in August of the same year. The government survey was made in 1836. This map contains an inset note from the government report.*

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Printed on thin, bank note-like paper, though the paper itself is not fragile. Moderate toning and offsetting. Partially erased pencil graffiti just under the title.