

Silver Hills

Early Years



Shawnee Lookout

Painting by Mary Louise Holt

Ray Ellis moved his family to Silver Hills in the early 20th century. He told his grandson, Charlie Ellis, a story about Indian lookouts camped at the point with a view of the Ohio River below. The Indians watched for settlers making their way down river on flat boats. The lookouts signaled a raiding party hiding by the river at the first bend when they spotted boats. Charlie, at a young, impressionable age, easily envisioned the Indians camped out at “Beeler’s Point” and the raiding party down by the river.

There is evidence to suggest the story is true. Indian arrowheads were recovered at “Beeler’s Point” when William H. Beeler broke ground for his new house in the mid 1920’s. His son, William Russell Beeler and Russell’s wife, moved into his father’s home shortly after he died. Russell lived on the property until his death in 1980. His wife, Inez, remained in the house until her death in 1995. After Russell died, Inez gifted the arrowhead collection to Harry Carnighan, a life long resident of Silver Hills.

There is another story about William and Charlotte Tuley sharing water from their well with a family of Indians living on the side of the Hill, not far from the Tuley Home. William W. Tuley and his wife, Charlotte built a house on the bluff overlooking the Ohio River in the late 1860’s. A summer kitchen was located behind the house. The cistern was just behind the summer kitchen. By the late 1870’s the water flowing down Falling Run Creek had become contaminated by local industry. A young lad who removed from the City in 1825 recalls Falling Run Creek being pure, clean and home to wildlife and large catfish. In an act of gratitude for sharing their water, the family of Indians gifted Charlotte Tuley a pair of Indian moccasins. It is believed the moccasins still exist today. True or not, both accounts of Indian life on the Knob clearly illustrates early inhabitants on Silver Hills.

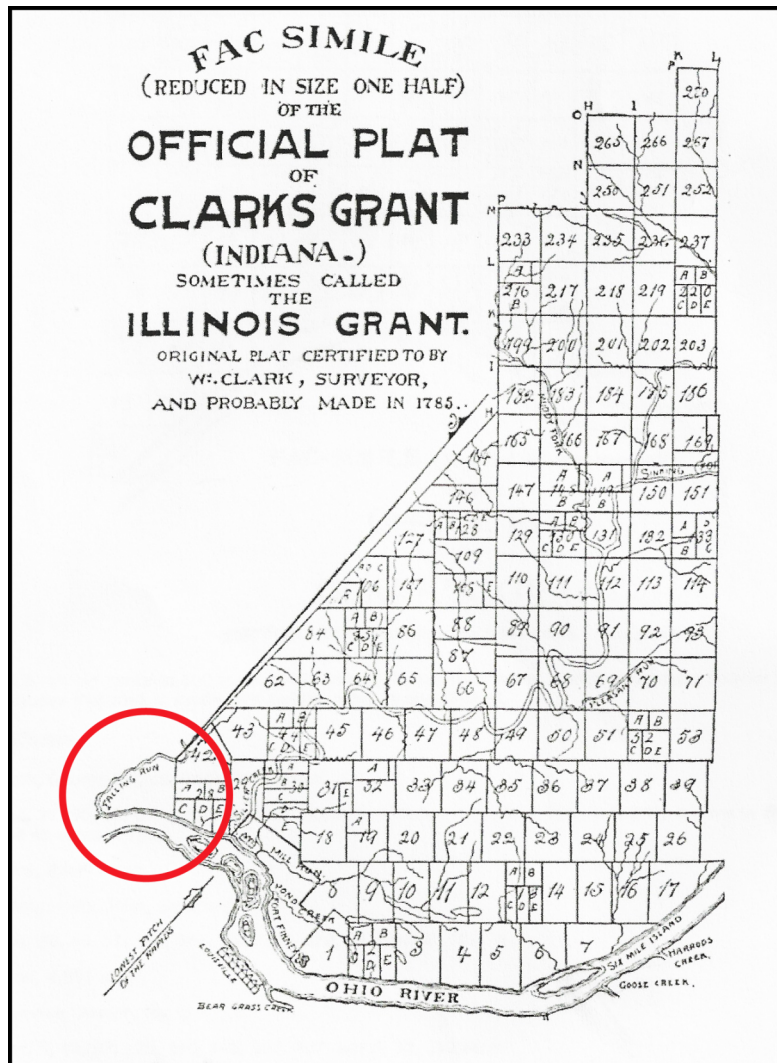
Clark’s Grant

Western expansion into the Northwest Territory of Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois was gaining ground in the 1770’s. Indian tribes occupying the territory fought back. The British armed the Indians during the Revolutionary War and raids against advancing settlers worsened. George Rogers Clark convinced Patrick Henry, governor of Virginia, help was needed to protect the colonists against Indian attacks in the Northwest Territory. George Rogers Clark was given command of the mission. Clark assembled an army of about 175 men and marched westward. When the Revolutionary War officially ended by the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, “Clark had helped America to lay claim to a large swath of land.”

Silver Hills

Early Years

Military Veterans were compensated by the U. S. Government through the Benefit Payments and Land Grant Programs. At the close of Clarks military campaign in the Northwest Territory he was granted a large track of land north of the Ohio River. The land was to be divided amongst his soldiers. Officers received anywhere from 200 to 8,000 acres and privates were granted 108 acres. It is interesting to note, the southwest boundary of Clarks Grant lies east of Falling Run Creek. It does not include the land west of Falling Run Creek and Silver Hills. (See Figure 1)



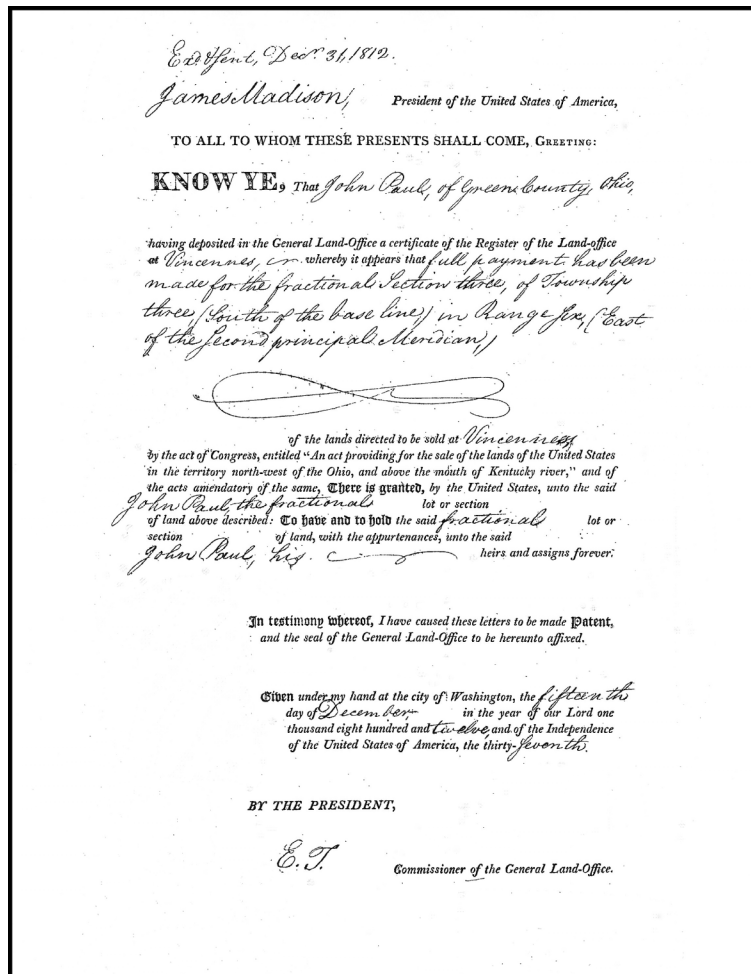
(Figure 1)

Silver Hills

Early Years

Colonel John Paul

John Paul served as a private under George Rogers Clark as a notable soldier. Under the provisions of the Benefit Payments and Land Grant Programs, private John Paul received 108 acres of land north of the Ohio River and east of present day Charlestown, Indiana. Between 1781 and 1800 John Paul bought land in Kentucky. He was the first Clerk and Coroner of Hardin County until he resigned in 1800. John Paul moved his family to Hamilton, Ohio and bought land in Green County, OH. In 1803 he founded the city of Xenia, Ohio. In 1807 the United States Land Office opened in Vincennes, Indiana. Still restless at age 50, John Paul and Robert Lafollette walked from Green County, Ohio to Vincennes, Indiana to a land sale, and on December 15, 1812 John Paul purchased and paid for 609.27 acres in Range 6, Township 3, Section 3 fractional shares, excluding the Ohio River. He paid \$1.25 per acre. Range 6, Township 3, Section 3 is present-day New Albany including Silver Hills (see figure 2 land patent).



(Figure 2)

Silver Hills

Early Years

On his return trip back to Ohio, John Paul stopped to survey the land he purchased and decided the land was not entirely to his liking. He continued up river in search for more suitable land, and in 1808 he purchased the land and found Madison, Indiana. In 1812 John Paul volunteered in the War of 1812. He was not a commissioned officer and instead was given the honorary ranking of “*Colonel*”. On December 15, 1812 Col. Paul sold all the property in Range 6, Township 3, Section 3 to the Scribner Brothers. In 1813 the Scribners established the city of New Albany and immediately begin to sell the property throughout the territory. The humble beginnings of Silver Hills started with a land acquisition then continued with a series of land sales first by Col. John Paul and then by the Scribner family and so on.

The Knob West of the City

“Silver Hills”

Rising 200 feet above the City, the stone knob escarpment west of New Albany was called the “*Knob*”. When settlers discovered wild cane (*arundinaria gigantea*) growing on the side of the hill, it became known as “*Caney Knob*”. The cane still grows there today. Caney Knob becomes a common name for the Hill from the 1850’s to mid 1880’s. The name is documented in the city directories and in numerous newspaper articles throughout this period. If not by mistake, two residents living on Caney Knob in the late 1860’s are listed in the city directories living on “Bald Knob”. In 1879 a former resident of New Albany who in 1825 removed from the city and comes back to visit, writes an article published in the New Albany Ledger about his stroll around “Caney Knob”. John Graham was commissioned by the Scribner brothers to survey and plat the land in New Albany. After completing the survey of “Caney Knob”, Mr. Graham sets pen to paper and wrote the following poem.

On “Caney Knob”

By John K. Graham

Above the noise and bustle of the town,
Her on High Caney Knob I set me down:
The pleasant theme invites me while I stay
The far-extended prospect to survey.
As from this lofty height I look below,
I see the beautiful Ohio flow.
And on its board smooth surface can espy
The wings of Commerce, steamboats, gliding by,
While Clouds of smoke, high rising in the air,
Announce that other boats are drawing near.
Steam, wondrous power, to what perfection
brought.

Silver Hills

Early Years

And what amazing changes hast thou wrought!
With pleasure now I turn my eager eyes
To where New Albany lies
Spread out below, as on a map appears,
While mingled sound of business greet my ears,
As with delight upon the scene I gaze,
My memory recurs to by-gone days
When all this space o'er which a city spreads,
And sumptuous buildings rear their heads.
I've seen with dark forest overran,
With not a trace of civilized man;
Now church and school, society refined,
Each science and each art are here combined,
Those agents to whose potent powers I trace
All that adorn and dignify our race.
Next to Kentucky's shores I cast my eyes
Where widely spread the town of Portland lie,
And yet a little further, shipping port,
Of steamboats the chief harbor and resort;
More distant, part of Louisville is seen,
A part being hid by trees that intervene;
A spacious city spreading far and wide
And worthy to be Kentucky's toast and pride'
And last, in background of the entire scene,
See forests clothed in robes of vivid green,
Checker'd with farms of which the fertile soil
With plenteous crops reward their owner's toil.
PIONEER.

Naming of Silver Hills

The Knobs extend some 50 miles northwest from New Albany. The trees on the Knobs cast a silvery reflection at various times throughout the year. Indians indigenous to the area gave the hills the "sing song" name, Silver Hills. The "Silver Heights" Camp Grounds was founded 1888. It is about this time the name Silver Hills begins to appear in newspapers, city directories and other publications. At the onset of the big real estate expansion on Caney Knob beginning in 1891 the name Silver Hills is permanently established.