



Silver Hills Historical Society

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Silver Hills Historical Shorts

John Paul – bought land below the falls of the Ohio River on the northern shore of river in 1807. By way of the rivers, he made his way to the site to evaluate his purchase. An unofficial story was told, his wife, Sarah, took one look at the overgrown, brush infested, low land, and declared she did not approve.

John was born near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania November 12, 1758. At the age of nineteen John enlisted in the company of William Harrod. John was in William Harrod's company under George Rogers Clark on many campaigns throughout the Northwest Territory. He fought with Clark at Kaskaskia and Cahokia (Illinois) and at Vincennes (Indiana). When Clark's land grant was approved John was given a small parcel of land near Charlestown, Indiana for his services as private in the campaign.

John briefly settled in Harden County, KY. In 1800, he and his wife, with their first born, moved to Hamilton, OH, where he served as clerk and recorder. In 1802 John became a delegate from Hamilton county to the First Constitutional Convention of OH. In 1803 he was a member of the First District of the first senate of OH, and found Xenia, OH.

In 1807 he turned his attention in the opening up, and settling, the new purchases in the Indiana Territory which were being put up for sale as fast as they could be bought from the Indians. In the spring of 1807 John walked from Xenia to Vincennes to the Government land office with the purpose of buying land. The sale is recorded in Tract Book, page 20, dated April 27, 1807 – United States of America to John Paul- Fractional Section 3, Township 3, South Range 6 East, containing 609 27/100 acres, what is present-day New Albany, including the land where Silver Hills is located today. John returned by way of the rivers and inspected his new purchase. Not being satisfied himself he continued his investigation of conditions along the Ohio River. The following year at a sale of public land, John bought the site of Madison, Indiana where he found the village of Madison. He is buried in a cemetery in Madison.

On October 13, 1813, in consideration of \$8,000, John Paul and his wife, Sarah, warranty deed to Nathaniel Scribner and Abner Scribner the 609 acres Fractional Section 3, Township 3, Range 6 East. The Scribner brothers and their families had made their way from Albany, New York to the Indiana Territory, where they decided to settle and establish the village of New Albany. After passing they over the rapids at the fall of the

Ohio, it's likely the wives said enough is enough and declared they were going no further.

The Scribner's commissioned John K. Graham, a well-known and accredited land surveyor, to survey the land they purchased from John Paul. While surveying the knob west of the city (Silver Hills) Graham discovered wild cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) growing on the hillside. He sat down and penned the poem, Caney Knob. From then on, and until 1890, the knob was officially named, Caney Knob.

The Temperance Movement, prohibition to alcohol consumption and liquor sales, was established in the United States in the 1830s,-1840s. From 1840s to the 1920s the movement focused on education and laws regulating availability as well as complete prohibition. Individual movements took on names such as "Teetotalers, American Temperance Society, Woman's Christian Temperance Union etc. In 1893 the Anti-Saloon League was organized in Ohio. Silver Hills was not without its own intolerance.

William A. Walker operated a saloon out of his home, Rose Cottage, on Silver Hills. In 1892, William moved his saloon, Rose Cottage, just in front of the reservoirs to the corner of Lower Eight and Market Streets. He and his family continued to live at the Cottage.

Outside the Silver Heights camp, in Oakwood, individuals set up frame shanties and hung out signs. There was no moonshine whisky or beer offered for sale, as far as one could see. However, they advertised refreshments: hot coffee, sandwiches, ice cream, and "all other kinds of refreshments". The carnival like booths promoted shooting galleries, ring tossing, and other gambling devises. It was apparent "all other kinds of refreshments" meant liquor could be bought.

In 1892 the Courier- Journal reported, "*Special officers John J. Stoll and Dave Stein were compelled to pound a half- dozen disorderly men into submission Sunday evening at the camp- grounds, in the Silver Hills. A beer and whisky joint at the terminus of the road was operated all day, and at night the troughs swarmed out, frenzied with drink, and amused themselves with annoying the ladies going to and coming from the grounds. Complaints will be filed at once against the proprietor of the saloon for selling liquor on Sunday, and the probability are that the fines imposed will greatly exceed the profits of his day's business.*"

A year later the Courier- Journal reported, "*In the Circuit Court yesterday, Charles Miller pleaded guilty to eleven indictments for violation of the liquor law, and was fined \$10 costs in each case, the fine and cost aggregating \$400. There were twenty- two indictments found against Miller for violation of the liquor law, and eleven were nollod. He operated saloon on the Silver Hills near the camp meeting last summer, and the indictments were found through the efforts of the Rev. J.F. Sheridan, one of the visiting evangelists who took active part in the meetings.*"

Penalties in the form of fines were stiff. George Sappenfield was arrested at Scenic Park for being drunk on a Saturday evening. In default of \$200 bond, equivalent to \$5,800 in today's money, he was jailed until his court appearance.

Alligator on Silver Hills was caught near the water works reservoir in 1894. Thomas Hipple found a young alligator about three feet long on Silver Hills. The “saurian” was probably pumped into the reservoir from the river when quite small. *Courier-Journal July 14, 1894.*

The Carnighan family on Adams Street had a pet alligator for five years. His name was Alfred. The alligator was a gift from grandmother, Dorothy Carnighan of Silver Hills. She had been vacationing in Florida where she bought the baby alligator. It grew to be four feet in length, a bit too large to comfortably handle. In a round about way it ended up in the Cleveland zoo.

Hobos, Tamps and Colored People An army of hoboes broke camp at the Payne farm on the river road below New Albany and moved to the old Scenic Park on the Silver Hills. The *Courier-Journal* reported on June 24, 1894, *The new camp is located in a thick growth of black jacks in a huge ravine at the base of the hill, an abundance of water being provided by pipes from the water works reservoirs. Sentries have been placed at the gates of the park, and the curious are not allowed to enter without first paying a fee of five cents. There has been considerable opposition to the prospects of moving the tramp army to the Silver Hills, and eight of the directors of the Highland railroad, owners of the land, were opposed to such course. From a financial standpoint, however, it is a good move, as it is expected that not less than 10,000 people from Louisville, New Albany and Jeffersonville will visit the camp to-day, and these represent five cents each way, making a handsome day's work for the railway.*

Supt. Cannon of the New Albany police force, has instructed his men to arrest any of the tramps found loitering in the city, and last evening a round dozen were locked up in the Central station to be put at work on the rock pile tomorrow.

The Water Works Company has had a large force of special police put into service to protect the reservoirs on the Silver Hills while the tamp army is encamped there.

The article begins with identifying the group as an “army of hobos”. However, there was a difference between a hobo and a tramp. A hobo was defined as a migrant worker or homeless vagrant, whereas, a tamp was defined as one who worked only when forced to. A hobo was a traveling worker. The life of a hobo was a separate and distinct American culture, a culture with its own ethical code. For example, when in town, a hobo was to always respect the local law and officials, and try to be a gentleman at all times.

In 1893 a colored camp set up at Scenic Park, on the Silver Hills, which continued for two weeks. In September 1900 the *Courier-Journal* reported, *This afternoon the colored people of the city will celebrate Lincoln's emancipation proclamation at Oakwood Park, on the Silver Hills. A number of speakers have been secured, among whom are Prof. C. A. Prosser, of this city; C. L. Purce and C. H. Parish, of Louisville.* Charles Allen Prosser of New Albany (1871 – 1952) was the father of vocational education in the United States. The Prosser Career Education Center in New Albany is named after Charles Allen Prosser.