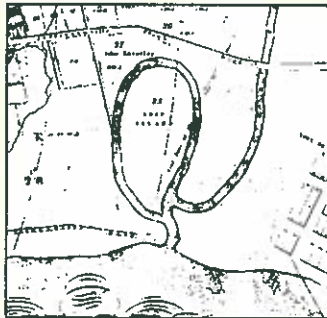


HISTORY OF "LOOP ISLAND"



William Clark, a cousin to George Rogers Clark, first surveyed the west line of the Town of Clarksville in 1785. Starting at the Ohio River, walking north, he crossed Silver Creek 3 times and documented the loop in Silver Creek as shown on the map at left. Due to river erosion, the point where he started is approximately 140 ft. from the existing bank of the river. The west line of the original town of Clarksville, which is the oldest town in the Northwest territory of the USA, is located approximately through the middle of the two pond areas. The line is marked by two metal poles set on the trail toward the railroad bridge.

The 1824 map to the right shows the loop in Silver Creek, before the flow enters the falls of the Ohio area. The shale rock outcroppings may have been some of the geological reasons for Silver Creek to originally form the "loop", although this has not been historically proven (yet). This map also shows attempts to construct canals around the Falls of the Ohio, including attempts to build the canals on the Indiana side of the river.



The map at left from 1854 shows the first time Silver Creek is shown forming "Loop Island". Loop Island was formed by the creek washing out during a flood or being dug through the loop in the creek to form an island. Historical accounts haven't been found to indicate if the creek channel was dug intentionally, or washed out naturally. The island had boat building business located on it in 18:???. Over 500 men were arrested on the island and taken to the fort in Clarksville. This occurred when Aaron Burr, then US Vice President, developed a plan to take the boats to capture New Orleans from the Spanish. Aaron Burr was arrested in Natchez, MS and tried for treason as it was believed he planned on creating a new country after the capture of New Orleans. He was acquitted (not guilty) in the trial, and the men were released. Al Goodman named this area "Loop Island Wetlands" in 1990 after seeing this historical map



This 1928 aerial photo of the Loop Island shows how the Ohio River moved north due to erosion of the river bank since 1854. It also shows crops planted on both sides of Silver Creek, with corn stalks stacked on the east side of Silver Creek. The Moser Leather Tannery and Tennessee Fertilizer Co. is shown discharging water and wastes into the lagoon created by the old section of the Silver Creek "loop". Both railroads are active in this photo, and a small building for the Gohmann-Kaehler Foundry is located at the north east end of the "loop". Also, note the start of the city dump on the river bank at east 18th St.

This 1946 aerial photo shows the entire island and adjoining areas being farmed for crops. Most all trees have been cleared and the area has just been plowed for crops. It also shows heavy mud being washed down Silver Creek to the Ohio River. To the west of the area, the city dump is on fire and typically burned for many months to consume paper, wood, and similar burnable wastes. Both railroads are active in this photo. Also note there is no Main Street in this section of the City, only railroad tracks.



This 1963 photo shows major changes in the area. The floodwall and flood levee were constructed with the levee located around the fertilizer building and up to the tannery. Since the tannery was so close to the hillside here, a concrete flood wall was used to keep from having to demolish the tannery. Actually one of the tannery buildings was cut at an angle to clear the area for the floodwall. After crossing the railroad tracks, the flood levee was then used where area permitted. Also note the large excavation of the second pond by Silver Creek. This soil was used to build the highway coming into Spring St. from Clarksville. This created a "borrow pit" which is now the smaller pond here. Farming is still used in the island area, however it's size is reduced. Also, the 18th St. flood levee gate is used for access to the dump city dump, which is still on fire.