

Old Stone Chimney

The old stone chimney in a field west of town is all that remains of a cabin which was once the Indian agent's payment house. The two room log cabin was originally built by Chief Richardville for his daughter Susan Richardville and her French trader husband, Henry Ossem (Aussum aka Henry Reed)

After the treaties were signed with the United States government the Indians were paid a certain amount of money for their lands each year. Kegs of silver dollars would be delivered here at the Forks, sometimes worth \$60,000 - \$70,000. The kegs of silver dollars were kept in the Indian House closet in the middle downstairs room before distribution. (Mrs. Josephine Leming, a Miami granddaughter remembered this fact)

When the payments were made, each family head would bring a bundle of sticks to show how many people were in his family. Great crowds of Miami Indians would gather here at the log cabin to receive their silver dollars from the United States government after their land was sold. Later there were several other locations for the payment grounds. A later location for paying annuities was north along Clear Creek to be farther removed from the white traders.

Silver Creek supposedly got its name because someone once stole a keg of silver and hid it in the creek. Some people believe the silver is still hidden somewhere in the creek and search for it today. The record of the last payment can be found in the Atlas of Huntington County in 1879. It gives the names of the Indians and the number of sticks they brought. At this time many white traders gathered here with many items to sell to the Indians.

To try to keep the Indians from getting cheated by the white traders the Indian chiefs had an Indian trading post as white traders were known to charge outrageous sums of money such as \$3.00 a yard for cheap calico fabric. One trader tried to charge several dollars for a single sewing needle saying that the man who had made them had died and there would be no more made.