The Mississippi’s current, and the flooding was total. The Mississippi all but abandoned its loop around the old town, and the new channel went down the Kaskaskia. Within a few years the inhabitants of old Kaskaskia had gone to the high ground in the middle of the peninsula — their old homes had gone permanently beneath the Mississippi.

Old residents can recall rowing over the site of the old town and seeing wells and other stone structures looming beneath the muddy waters.

Kaskaskia is reached today by traveling nine miles south on U.S. 61 to St. Marys, then turning east on Highway “U”. Just outside St. Marys is a long bridge going over a wide, flat cornfield several feet below. That cornfield used to be the Mississippi river.

The Church of the Immaculate Conception — the mission started by Father Marquette in 1675, when Kaskaskia was at Starved Rock in northern Illinois — is now in the center of Kaskaskia Island. It houses the hand-carved walnut altar built for the second church in 1738.

Next to the church is the shrine holding the old bell. Its cornerstone is the same one used for the old rock church, and the date of 1737 still is clearly visible.

Boisbriant evidently was a stranger to the ways of the Mississippi, for he built his Fort de Chartres right on the banks. It was hefty enough for Indians

Top Map Left:

In 1880 the Mississippi river swung dangerously close to the old town of Kaskaskia, located on the southwest bank of the Kaskaskia river. The two-mile distance between the two rivers had narrowed to 400 feet since 1880.

Lower Map:

By 1915 the devastation started with the flood of 1881 was complete, and old town site was in center of Mississippi channel. Survivors relocated in Ste. Genevieve and in center of peninsula.