

Falls of the Ohio Area Trivia Questions— Geography, History, Environment



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1. What city upstream is located where the Ohio River begins, a place where 3 rivers come together? _____
2. What famous American Revolutionary War hero established the “Falls Cities” of Louisville and Clarksville? _____
3. (Tricky question. Be careful!) The Falls of the Ohio or rapids is the only one on the 981-mile-long Ohio River. The dangerous rapids were an obstacle to boats and the area was the site of many shipwrecks, with hundreds of lives lost. This was before boats could bypass the Falls by going through the Portland Canal built in 1830 and enlarged later. 6 different “Falls Cities” (Indiana side: Jeffersonville, Clarksville, New Albany; Kentucky side: Louisville, Shippingport, Portland) were established above and below the Falls as stopping places, river ports and places to transfer goods and passengers around the Falls by land while Falls pilots guided the boats through the rapids or “shot the rapids”. Who was the first person to “shoot the rapids”?

4. Of those 6 “Falls Cities”, which one was established first? _____. Bonus point: What year? _____
5. Those 6 Falls cities all had one major industry in common in the early to mid-1800s primarily that related to the river transportation and was very important to their economic growth. What product or thing did all of those cities play a role in making? (Hint: the Howard family was famous for its involvement in this industry and there is a museum in Jeffersonville dedicated to this industry. _____
6. The famous bird painter, John James Audubon, lived in this area for a few years in the early 1800s, studying and painting birds. The most common bird of that time darkened the skies when they flew over. Unfortunately, as they roosted, they were easy targets and were slaughtered for a food source which led to its extinction in the early 1900s. What bird was it?

7. What was the most powerful Native American tribe in the Falls area (Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio) in the 1700s? (Hint: George Rogers Clark defeated them in a military campaign in the early 1800s) _____
8. Many Native American tribes in this area survived for thousands of years in the Falls area by eating thousands of these Ohio River creatures whose remains archaeologists have found in mounds. (Hint: It is not a fish). What was this food they took from the river?

9. So, the super history buffs know that Louisville was named after King Louisville, the 16th. (Louis + “ville”—which means town or village). But what country did he rule?

10. One of the largest fish in the river is also one of the oldest on earth, has no scales but skin like a shark and swims like a shark, a long flat snout, a bluish-gray body, can reach a length of 7 feet and a weight of two hundred pounds and is fished for its prized caviar (fish eggs). That’s a long run-on sentence, but what is this odd-looking fish? -----
11. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark met at the Falls to plan their famous expedition out West, recruited their initial crew of Kentucky and Indiana men here then launched the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-07) to explore the new western territories. But William Clark was not President Thomas Jefferson’s first choice. Which relative of his was the first choice, declined the offer and recommended William Clark to command the expedition to President Jefferson?

12. The Portland Canal was one of the first major canals built on the Ohio River in 1830. It is located on the Kentucky shoreline and part of it lies within the Falls of the Ohio National Wildlife Conservation Area administered by the US Army Corps of Engineers. What is its major purpose? (3 possible answers) -----
13. This US President visited the Falls area in 1929 to dedicated the new Lock & Dam #41 (replaced in 1964 by the current dam) and the George Rogers Clark Memorial Bridge, the first auto bridge in this area. Who was that president? -----
14. The early French explorers named the Ohio River in French, “La belle riviere”. What does that mean in English? -----
15. Which of the following famous people is the ONLY PERSON who did not visit the Falls area?
- a. Daniel Boone — Explorer
 - b. Henry Clay — Kentucky Senator
 - c. Aaron Burr — Vice-President
 - d. John Muir — Founder of the Sierra Club and Yosemite National Park
 - e. William Henry Harrison — President
 - f. Jerry Abramson — Mayor of Louisville
 - g. Sitting Bull — Sioux Native American Chief
 - h. Ulysses S. Grant — Civil War General and President
 - i. Meriwether Lewis & William Clark

ANSWERS to the Falls Trivia Bonus Questions: Geography, History and the Environment

1. Pittsburgh.
2. George Rogers Clark, hero of the American Revolution who conquered the Northwest Territory from the British.
3. Nobody knows! Some unknown Native American thousands of years ago.
4. Louisville, 1778.
5. Steamboat-building industry
6. Passenger pigeon
7. Shawnee
8. Mussels
9. France
10. Paddlefish (spoonbill catfish)
11. George Rogers Clark
12. A. The Portland Canal was built to bypass or go around the dangerous rapids of the Falls of the Ohio B. It allowed boats to navigate the river without going through the rapids. Also, possible C. It raised or lowered boats inside the locks so they could go up or down the river
13. Herbert Hoover
14. The beautiful river
15. Sitting Bull, Sioux chief