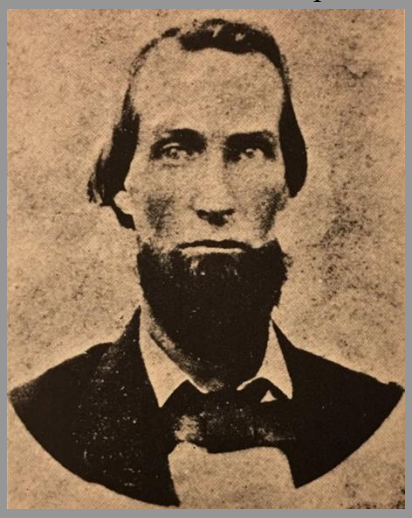
UNIQUE GRAVESTONE CONNECTED TO FAMOUS PIONEER

by Kelly Coffey



In Ashe County, located in North Carolina's far northwestern corner, lies a cemetery with an unusual gravestone. It is an elongated rock, protruding 5.8 feet from the ground and only six and a half inches wide. The story behind the stone involves one of America's most famous frontiersmen.

Daniel Boone lived in North Carolina 24 years (1750-1779, for five years he lived in Virginia) before moving to Kentucky. He was a hunting companion of early Ashe resident Thomas Callaway, and had a hunting camp near where he lived. The relationship between the two is supported somewhat by the fact that one of Thomas' brothers was Richard Callaway, a fellow settler with Boone years later in Kentucky. In addition, Thomas' nephew, Flanders Callaway, married Boone's daughter Jemima. A vestige of this relationship still stands in Ashe County. According to the legend (which has some variations), Boone killed an albino deer, which fell across a nine-foot-long narrow stone only half a foot wide. He showed it to Callaway, who took an intense interest in it. Boone was so impressed by Thomas' fondness for the stone that he carved Callaway's initials in it and gave it to him. Callaway directed his family to use it for his gravestone, which they did, and there it remains today. (In addition to the unique headstone, Callaway's grave is unusual in that he was buried in a dugout canoe.)



Thomas Callaway

Source Suni Shell

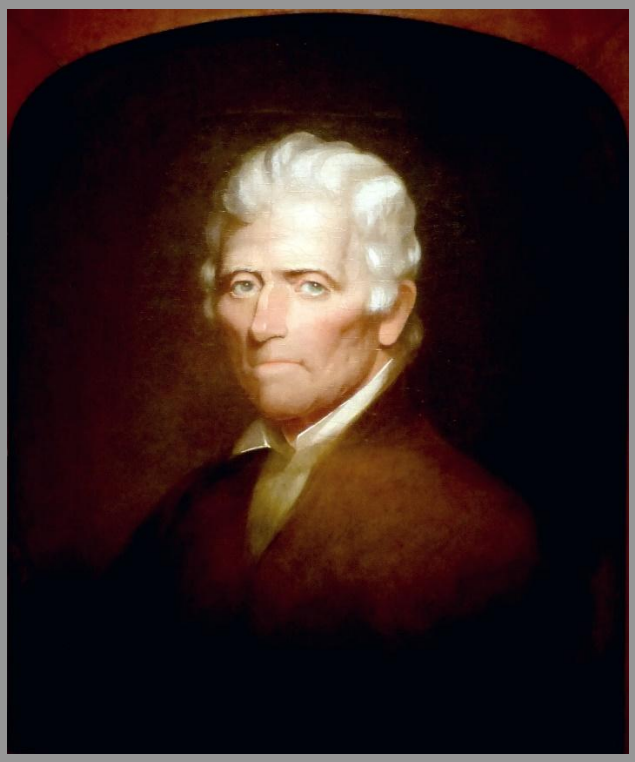
The source of the legend was Clayton McNeill (1900-1985), who said he heard it from Callaway's great-grandchildren. For many years, McNeill was the caretaker of the Calloway Cemetery where Thomas is buried (the spelling of Calloway is inconsistent).

The Calloway Cemetery is very accessible, located beside Hwy 163, 6.6 miles from its intersection with Hwy 221 in West Jefferson. The unusual gravestone is easy to find in the small burial ground.

1 Boone carved Thomas Callaway's initials on the stone



Daniel Boone





New River in the vicinity of the cemetery

Sources:
Collins, Robert L. *The State: Down Home in North Carolina,* April 1977, p. 25.
Elliott, Lee, *Winston-Salem Journal*, quoted in The Heritage of Ashe County.