

Nashville Historical Newsletter

an avenue for historical sharing

At the Stone-Stoner Confluence

Musings by Mike Slate.

About half a mile south of the Stone's River bridge on Lebanon Road, along the new greenway trail, you can peer across the river at the place where Stoner's Creek empties into Stone's River. If you know your history, you will stop dead in your tracks for a few moments, knowing that you have arrived at a historic location. The confluences of streams were landmarks for the pioneers and early historians . . . and no doubt for the Indians before them. Whereas we might say today that Central Pike is just past the Stone's River bridge, the pioneers would more likely have said that a trail was just past the point where Stoner's Creek flows into the Stone's River.



Painting by Fred Hetzel (from NHN collection)

Standing on that special spot and watching the Stoner rushing into the Stone awakens the realization that stream confluences are also confluences of lives: hundreds, maybe thousands, of folks have stood in this same area long before the greenway made it accessible to us greenhorn pathfinders. Uriah Stone, for whom Stone's River was named, probably stood there. Michael Stoner, after whom Stoner's Creek was named, surely scouted around that spot. I wish I could tell you that these two "[long hunters](#)," so called because they explored and hunted for extended periods of time, met each other at that place and marveled together about the similarity of their surnames. That discussion may well have taken place, but

probably not there. Both Stone and Stoner might have hunted in the Wellen party in the early 1760s, but that group did not follow the Cumberland as far west as its confluence with Stone's River. It appears that the two pioneers explored our area at separate times in the late 1760s, about a dozen years before Nashville (or "Nashborough," as it was first called) was founded.

Nashville co-founder John Donelson would probably also have stood on that spot. He planted corn in the adjoining bottom land, called "Clover Bottom," and the Donelson family eventually lived nearby. No less an international dignitary than Andrew Jackson may very well have strolled that area himself, perhaps while his horses were warming up on the Clover Bottom race track. Another intriguing possibility is that Daniel Boone might have stood there. Boone and Stoner were not only compatriots but also close friends. Though I know of no record of a Boone visit to the Stone's River, he could have come with Stoner at some point in time.