

Michael Stoner: Where did he die and is likely buried ?

**By Richard L. Curtis
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(A word of thanks: The extensive research that this project required would not have been possible without the online library of Familysearch.org. Their many decades of photographing county court orders , deeds, and probate records and then converting what had been microfilms to online availability has been priceless. I am also thankful to Mr. Stuart Sanders, Director of Research at the Kentucky Historical Society and his staff. In addition Mrs. Joyce Munsey and others at the Wayne County Historical Society and Museum assisted. Finally, longtime Wayne County KY residents in the Fall Creek area have assisted: Mr. Mike Allen and Mr. Frank Frogge.)

While researching the history of roads in Pulaski County KY, I began by reviewing all court orders of Lincoln County KY, from which Pulaski County was formed in 1799. This search revealed an early road order in 1798 requested by a man named Michael Stoner. In the Lincoln County Court orders in March 1798, a request to establish a ferry across the Cumberland River was made by Michael Stoner. This order says it was from his own land on the north shore of the Cumberland River. Then in May 1798, a Lincoln County Court order reveals that he has made a request for a road to be built from Stanford KY to his ferry on the Cumberland River and the court sets out its construction. Perhaps Michael Stoner's military service with Benjamin Logan, the founder of Logan's fort and what became Stanford, helped.

The Pulaski County Court orders in 1801, reveal precincts being established for the newly formed county that reference boundaries beginning at the northern county border on the road from Stanford to Stoner's Ferry. The precinct border then went down the road to where it intersects the head of Pitman Creek. This is near current day Science Hill, KY. This reveals that what later became today's Hwy 1247 and Hwy 27 at the Lincoln County border coming south had its origin as Stoner's Ferry Rd.

Research to date by descendants of Michael Stoner reveals that it has not been determined where Michael Stoner is buried. The sources simply state that he was buried about 4.5 miles from Monticello in Wayne County with a grave simply marked by a crude stone. Several sources put forth the conjecture that his grave may be under the water at current day Lake Cumberland. Based on the following research, I believe this conjecture of a current day under-water grave is misguided.

Wayne County KY was formed in 1800 from parts of Pulaski County. The Wayne County Court records in September 1814, contains Michael Stoner's non-cupative last will filed by witnesses of a verbal will made in August 1814 while Michael Stoner was suffering his last illness.

During the days of the 1814 era, it is believed that in rural areas, community grave yards were used probably less than family grave yards on their farms. During these days, it is thought the custom was for rural folks to bury their dead on their own property close to their home. This enabled relatives to honor and care for the gravesites.

Where was the Michael Stoner home-place ? A review of Jillson's book of Kentucky land grants misread a few Michael Stoner land grants as being made to a Michael "Stone". The book also misspelled a grant to Michael Stoner's son, named Peter, by spelling it "Stones". The first Michael Stoner land grant in the Wayne County Ky area was received in 1801. This grant was started when Wayne was a part of Pulaski County. From the Lincoln County Court order first referenced above, it shows that Stoner had been living on the north side of the Cumberland River at least from the March 1798 request to establish his ferry across the Cumberland River. Pulaski County KY early court orders reveal many references to maintaining roads to Stoner's Ferry. Using the court order descriptions, I have concluded the road went from current Hwy 27 and at about Science Hill / Eubank KY area, turning west on today's Hwy 70 and following to Bethelridge area at the western county line. It then turned south via CainStore Ky, Faubush, Ky to Jabez, Ky and then through what is today the 4H camp to the north shore of Cumberland River.

In the days of 1800, Pulaski County court orders reveal the common practice of someone getting court permission to build either a mill or a ferry across a creek or river. Most of the time the applicant owns land on both sides of the creek or river.

Several years ago, Mr. Denny Lipscombe of Harrison County, KY donated to the Pulaski County Historical Society a framed copy of the original Michael Stoner land grant, that had been the possession of his father. The framed 1801 patent signed by Governor Garrard, hangs today in the Pulaski County Historical Society. This patent issued as a South of Green River grant (per KY legislation in 1798 and updated in 1800) is for 200 acres. The actual patent says it lays on the North side of the Cumberland River.

Examination of the Kentucky Land Office records show a contentious beginning to this grant. These South of Green River grants required improvement to property, at which point county court application could be made to verify the improvement. This was then sent to the land office, which issued a warrant. This was to be followed by a survey to be done setting its boundaries. Upon payment to the state the required price, a patent was issued with metes/bounds to the property...i.e. like a deed. The survey number 2795 shows the same metes/bounds as the framed patent, BUT, the survey says it lays SOUTH of the Cumberland River. Mr. William Sharpe files a lawsuit and protest with the land office of the survey claim. Without much understandable reasoning, the court dismisses the lawsuit in favor of Michael Stoner and his patent is issued. In April 1800, a Pulaski County court order shows that Michael Stoner mistakenly located his grant originally at a place that was already claimed by a military grant. Likely this was on the north side of the River. The Pulaski County court order, states that Stoner was permitted to relocate his grant. The Land office records indicate the grant was to be at

Stoner's Ferry "Landing". The earliest available U.S. Geological Survey map of the area in 1911 and a 1930 U.S. Army Corp of Engineers map, has shown the "Landings" on the south side of the river.

As one can see, the records of this original 200 acre land grant to Stoner in Pulaski County (that became Wayne County) are quite confusing. Some indicate North of River, some South of the River. Deed traces indicated that the property was on the waters of Fall Creek. The discovery of excellent research done by Jeffrey LaFavre, Ph.d. of the tracts at Fall Creek north of the river, show that Stoner never owned land north of the Cumberland River at Fall Creek. His work can be found at Lafavre.us/genealogy. Dr. LaFavre's work is extensively documented and relied on original military grant records from the Kentucky Historical Society. As will be seen later, it was determined via tracing of deeds to the 200 acre land grant in Wayne County KY, that the actual place of the grant was NOT on the actual river. Perhaps the land grant lawsuit filed by Sharpe caused what was hoped to be a grant on the river at Stoner's Ferry to be moved.

I have concluded that the Stoner Ferry was located at what is today called Morrow's Landing. This is based on court orders in Pulaski and later Wayne County Ky, wherein they reference roads connecting Stoner's Ferry to a "grove" on the south side of the Cumberland River. A study of old and new maps of the area around Morrow's landing, show there to be an area not far south from Morrow's landing that is named Roger's Grove. Further, a study of the 1911 map, shows the road going straight to the north once across the river from Morrow's Landing. The 1911 map shows a ferry at the mouth of Fall Creek also. However, the road to Fall Creek ferry on the 1911 map, turns east to reach the crossing to Fall Creek. I have concluded from the evidence, that the Fall Creek Ferry came later, possibly by the Rankins toward the middle of the 1800's.

But wait, Michael Stoner had 2 (two) land grants in what became in 1800 Wayne County. The second was authorized by the Wayne County Court in 1802. Jillson's book of land grants as well as the actual records of the Land Office, however, show that this 2nd grant for 150 acres was not surveyed until 1810. The Land Office records shows that the purchase price was not paid to the KY land office until 1814 (the year of Michael Stoner death) and the 1814 payment was for only 125 acres of the 150 warrant. Further, the Land Office Records show that another 15 acres of this 150 warrant was paid for in 1820, after Michael Stoner death. This 150 acre land grant, which is difficult to locate, in spite of extensive deed tracing, appears to be south of the Cumberland River on the waters of Fall Creek. A reference in the deed where Peter Stoner, one son of Michael Stoner, is buying out his siblings of their inherited interest in 1827, states the land adjoined Michael Stoner's other property. Peter Stoner obtained a land grant for 50 acres in 1825 that states it also adjoins Michael Stoner's land.

Extensive efforts (400 hours) to trace the deeds from the sale of the Michael Stoner's property to the current day, have at last, resulted in locating the Stoner 200 acre grant

and in fact the adjoining 150 acre land grant too. In older times, land was traded/sold regularly and subdivided often. With deed references many times to land marks of trees and rocks, it has been very difficult to trace with a high level of confidence. At times, there can be reference to land marks that are determinable such as roads that still exist, even if by different names. Case in point, are deeds that reference south of the Cumberland River land draining to Fall Creek that lay on Robertsport Road. Reference to Rennick's Kentucky Place Name research housed at Moorehead University, reveals that Robertsport was on the Cumberland River and changed its name to Bud post office. The 1911 U.S. geologic survey map shows that Bud is now Conley Bottom Boat dock area. Therefore, Robertsport Rd was what became Hwy 1275 today.

The initial 200 acre grant to Michael Stoner was sold by his son Peter in 1832 to two men: James Wray and Hamilton Wray. Research assistance provided by the Wayne County Historical Society in a book on the history of Wayne County reveals that James W. Wray was a son of Hamilton Wray. The two Wray's evidently divide the 200 acres, with James Wray selling his 100 acres shortly after 1832 to a man named Turner. Turner, likewise, sells the land and eventually it, along with another 40 acres for a total of 140 acres, ends up in the hands of Mr. Thomas Eades. A review of a book on the early history of the Methodist church in Wayne County, reveals that the Eades family were charter members of a Methodist Church named Locketts Chapel. This church exists today on Hwy 1275 at Old Fall Creek Rd. Hwy 1275 was once known as Robertsport Rd. In 1874, Mr. Thomas Eades transfers by deed one acre for a parsonage that adjoins the Locketts Chapel Methodist Church. The purchase deed by Mr. Thomas Eades in an 1859 deed for 140 acres, references that the land is on Robertsport Rd. This 1859 purchase deed also says that the land begins on an angle of Robertsport Rd. and gives a reference to a Stoner corner and Hamilton Wray border. An examination of the 1911 map, shows two 90 degree turns on Robertsport Road not far from Locketts Chapel. By platting the 1859 deed metes/bounds at this angle of Robertsport Rd./Hwy1275, it shows 140 acres laying along Hwy 1275 with a slender piece running southwest along Hwy1275 that ends next to Locketts Chapel. It is as a one acre lot off this slender piece that Thomas Eades deeds to Locketts Chapel in 1874 for the church parsonage.

Hamilton Wray, holds on to his 100 acres purchased from Peter Stoner until his death in 1859. In addition to this 100 acre Stoner property, Wayne County property tax records show that Hamilton Wray owned other land nearby. When the 100 acre Stoner tract is added to these other properties his total acreage is 270 acres. This 270 acres shows in the property tax records of his estate until 1870. Thereafter, I have been unable to trace its sale, or estate division among heirs, until 1874, when Margaret Wilhite, sells several tracts. The Wayne County history book previously referenced, in the discussion of the Wray family, mentions that one Hamilton Wray daughter is named Margaret Wilhite. In the Margaret Wilhite 1874 deed, one of the tracts of land that she sells, is a 14 acre timber tract that references a Michael Stoner corner as well as being a "division". Therefore, sometime between 1870 and 1874, evidently her fathers' estate lands are finally divided between Hamilton Wray's heirs, Margaret being one of them.

If a plat of the original 200 acre Michael Stoner land grant is made by laying over the Thomas Eades 140 acres, it shows that the 200 acre grant ran all the way back from Hwy 1275(Robertsport Rd) to a third Stoner corner as referenced in the Margaret Wilhite deed, which lays on a 90 degree turn in Old Fall Creek Road. Currently this 14 acres is several lots that are pasture. However a review of the 1911 map shows that it was in timber. A plat of the metes/bounds of this Margaret Wilhite deed shows it being a triangle laying at the Northern corner of Stoner's 200 acre grant.

Now, what about the 150 acre grant? The Wayne County court, authorizes the grant in 1802. As was mentioned above, the survey was not done until 1810 and the grant was not paid for until 1814 and 1820. In spite of this, the land appears on property tax records of Wayne County taxed to Michael Stoner beginning in 1802. This land was sold to a Mr. John McWhorter by Peter Stoner in 1832. A trace of the deed from there, shows that it passed eventually to the Dodson family and then to Dodson daughters, Mary and Rebecca who married Burnett men. A successful trace of 100 acres of this land via Mary Dodson Burnett, shows that eventually in 1960, it passed to Mr. J.C. Cooley. Mrs. Mary Burnett was buried in 1876 in what is today called Dodson Cemetery, according to findagrave.com. This cemetery is currently on Cooley lane north of Steubenville KY. A plat of the 150 acre survey is a little problematic. The metes/bounds of the survey, when platted, does not equal 150 acres, but rather much more. A review of the metes/bounds seems to reveal a copyists error in making a 50 into a 30. When changing the metes/bounds from 30 to 50 on one call, the plat comes closer to 150 acres and more closely matches the drawing of the survey found in the land office records of the 150 acre grant. When the corrected plat is placed on a map next to the 200 acre plat, it runs south from Hwy 1275 towards Hwy 90. Furthermore, it has a jut in the survey and mimics the road angle of Hwy 1275 that used to exist as referenced in the 1859 Thomas Eades purchase metes/bounds. Importantly, it covers a tract currently owned by the J.C. Cooley trust. This tract has the Dodson Cemetery located on it. Wayne County Cemeteries book by B.B. Coffey Sr, reveals that the Dodson Cemetery earliest marked grave was in 1852. However there were identified at the time of publication in the 1970's a total of 17 unmarked graves. This cemetery that was on the Michael Stoner 150 acre grant property, may hold his grave that was marked only by a crude stone.

It should also be noted, that a genealogical book on the Daniel Boone family has a section on the Michael Stoner family. This book published in 1922 by author Hazel Atterbury Spraker, shows that Michael Stoner had a son named John, who died in 1812. He too, is likely buried on the Michael Stoner property, in what may be the current Dodson Cemetery.

Effort to locate the 50 acre Peter Stoner land grant survey tract has not been made. Conjecture is that it was on Hwy1275 south of the 200 acre grant and next to the 150 acre tract on Cooley lane.

Appendix of supporting documents attached:

APPENDIX A

1/2 OF ORIGINAL 200 ACRE STONER LAND GRANT SOLD TO HAMILTON WRAY IN
1832 BY PETER STONER: DOCUMENTS

APPENDIX B

1/2 OF ORIGINAL 200 ACRE STONER LAND GRANT SOLD TO JAMES WRAY IN
1832 BY PETER STONER DOCUMENTS

EVENTUALLY TRANSFERRED TO THOMAS EADES IN 1859, THEN BY MODERN
DAY , PART OF THIS GOES TO THE GARRETT FAMILY.

APPENDIX C

DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE SECOND STONER LAND GRANT OF 150 ACRES WHICH ADJOINED THE FIRST STONER 200 ACRE LAND GRANT.

THIS PROPERTY WAS SOLD BY PETER STONER IN 1832 TO MR. McWHORTER. IT PASSES EVENTUALLY TO THE DODSON FAMILY AND BY MARRIAGE THE BURNETT FAMILY, BEFORE EVENTUALLY IN MODERN DAY PASSING TO J.C. COOLEY.