

The headstone for Andrew Jackson Sr. made quite

In early March 1931, a stranger drove into the yard of the Old Waxhaw Presbyterian Church in Lancaster County. He asked J.H. McClintock, an elder of the church, to show him the location of the grave of Andrew Jackson Sr., the father of the president. McClintock graciously showed the man an unmarked granite stone that was said to mark the grave.

The stranger told McClintock that he was a former governor of Tennessee and that he had been commissioned to return a stone that had been for years at "The Hermitage," Andrew Jackson's home near Nashville. The stranger went back to his car and carried the large stone to the grave, deposited it and then drove away.

The stranger had delivered the last fragment of the original grave marker. The previous fall a larger piece of rock had come from Tennessee along with the story that when Jackson Sr. was buried in the cemetery in 1767, the granite rock used to mark his grave had been dropped and broken. One of the men had taken the broken pieces to Tennessee, where they were kept as a family heirloom.

When the Tennessee people heard that the Catawba Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution was celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Battle of the Waxhaws with the unveiling of a marker identifying the grave of Jackson Sr., they returned the larger missing piece of the boulder.

The man who brought the rock in the fall "stepped off the distance from the large oak tree ... (and) after digging for about 10 inches, the other half of the rock, which was placed at the grave in 1767, was found." The two pieces fit exactly. This was the proof that the correct marker had been found.

Joseph G. Sassi, a Rock Hill stonemason, cut the inscription, which reads: "Here lies the buried Andrew Jackson, Sr., father of the seventh president of the United States. Born in Ireland. Died in February, 1767. Erected by Catawba chapter, D.A.R., Rock Hill, S.C., April 9, 1931." The old rock boulder was used as a footstone.

An overflow crowd was at the church April 9. The presiding officer was Mrs. C.K. Schwrar of Rock Hill, who introduced two speakers: R.E. Wylie of Lancaster and Prof. John W. McCain of Winthrop College. Wylie gave a biographical sketch of the elder Jackson, and McCain, a native of the Waxhaws, gave a historical setting of the section, a history of the church and an account of the Battle of the Waxhaws.

Andrew Jackson Sr. had died at age 29 after straining himself lifting a log only a few days before the future president was born. His neighbors sat up all night with the coffin, as was the Old World custom. A whiskey-filled gourd passed from hand to hand through the long night.

In the early light of morning, Jackson's body was placed on a mule-drawn sled. Mrs. Jackson and her two small boys, Hugh and Robert, rode in a wagon through snow and ice. The men had whiskey and fortified themselves at every creek and branch. The procession stopped at the McKemey and

a journey before

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Crawford relatives' for refreshment. It was twilight before they crossed the ford at Waxhaw Creek.

When the sled was pulled into the Waxhaw Presbyterian Church cemetery, it was discovered that the coffin was missing. The disconcerted pallbearers retraced their path in near-darkness and located the coffin snagged on a branch on the steep bank of Waxhaw Creek.

William Richardson, the minister who preached the funeral sermon, was a graduate of Edinburgh University in Scotland and is credited with making the Waxhaws the Presbyterian center of the S.C. backcountry.

After Andrew Jackson Jr. became the hero of the Battle of New Orleans, both North Carolina and South Carolina were eager to claim him as a native son. In fact, four states and Ireland all have claimed to be his birthplace. The debate still rages, even though Jackson himself never had any doubt that he was born in Lancaster District at the home of one of his uncles, James Crawford.