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MEGALITHS IN THE UPLAND SOUTH: IMPOSING STONES OF UNCERTAIN FUNCTION

Donald B. Ball and John C. Waggoner, Jr.

The term megalith (or menhir) is best known in association with large free standing stones erected in the British Isles and portions of western Europe (e.g. Burl 1979, 1980; Mohen 1999; Service and Bradbury 1979). Not so well known are three such monuments in Putnam and Smith counties in the central Cumberland River Valley of north-central Tennessee, six in east-central Alabama, two in Union County, Georgia, one in Lewis County, West Virginia, and two in southern Pennsylvania. These are listed in Table 1. In common with many of their European counterparts, the chronology, cultural association, and function of these pillars have been the subject of varying degrees of conjecture but in reality all are poorly understood. It is the purpose of this article to bring together the available information and pertinent source materials referable to these enigmatic monuments of unknown purpose within the Upland South region.

Monterey Standing Stone, Putnam County, Tennessee

It is appropriate to give all due credit to early twentieth century archaeologist William Edward Myer (1862-1923) of Carthage, Tennessee, for being the first student of regional prehistory to record the Standing Stone which once stood near the town of Monterey in northeastern Putnam County, (north-central) Tennessee. A sizable fragment of this much defaced sandstone megalith was incorporated in a monument erected in Monterey in 1895 (Figure 1) by a local civic group styling themselves the Improved Order of Red Men. As recorded by Myer (n.d.a:Chapter V; see also Myer 1928:834-835) within the pages of his unpublished manuscript titled Stone Age Man in the Middle South:

> One of the best known Indian remains in Tennessee is Standing Stone at Monterey. This interesting monument is of sandstone. It was originally about 8 feet high and stood by the side of the ancient Indian trail which led from the Tennessee River near the present site of Kingston to Cumberland River. This was the route later followed by the Walton Trail and more recently by the Tennessee Central Railroad. It reached the Cumberland River at [the] mouth of Flynn's Lick Creek in Jackson County (the whites later established Fort Blount at this crossing of Cumberland River[1]). This trail was largely used by the Cherokee and possibly other tribes. All accounts of this interesting stone agree that the Indians held it in high regard. Exactly what was their belief in regard to it

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Table 1. Summary of Presently Known Upland South Megaliths

State	County	Site/Location	Material	Likely chronology
Tennessee	Putnam	Monterey	sandstone	prehistoric
Tennessee	Smith	Kempville	limestone	historic?
Tennessee	Smith	Difficult	limestone	historic?
Alabama	Clay	1Cy225	schist	prehistoric
Alabama	Randolph	1Ra28	schist	prehistoric
Alabama	Talladega	1Ta719	schist	prehistoric
Alabama	Talladega	1Ta756	greenstone	prehistoric
Alabama	Lee	1Le307	[not reported]	historic grave?
Alabama	Calhoun	1Ca887	sandstone	prehistoric
Georgia (2)	Union	9Un367	metamorphic?	prehistoric
West Virginia	Lewis	State Resort Park	sandstone (?)	prehistoric
Pennsylvania	Huntingdon	Huntingdon	sandstone (?)	proto-historic
Pennsylvania	near Pittsburgh	Montour Trail	sandstone (?)	prehistoric

Figure 1. Remnant of Standing Stone megalith preserved in Monterey, Tennessee.

has long since been lost if ever known. The following information was obtained for the author by the Honorable John Turner Price of Monterey, Tennessee:

The information regarding Standing stone was largely obtained from Mr. Jack Whittaker. He perhaps knows more history about the old stone than anyone now living. He tells me that he got all the information from his father, Mr. Jeff Whittaker, who has lived in this immediate vicinity since his birth, 1818.

The Standing Stone was originally located about one mile west of the town of Monterey, directly on the Walton Road[2] and about 20 feet to the north of same. The stone was plain, about 8 feet tall, of pink sandstone, standing upright on a sandstone ledge. After it had fallen down some of the early settlers made some excavations under it, and found ashes and charcoal that seemed to have been buried there. It was the general impression with them that the stone marked the location of some treasures which the Indians had buried a good many years ago. It was also undoubtedly a marker of their trail which led across the Cumberland Mountains from Kingston to the West, and was used by the Cherokee tribe.

There are several caves near the stone, and Mr. Whittaker says his father found evidence that the Indians inhabited them, and it was his idea that they wintered here in the caves.

After the stone had fallen down, people in passing by would chip off pieces of it, and in order to preserve it the [Improved Order of] Red Man built the present monument and placed the old stone upon it. "Mr. Whittaker does not know whether or not the Indians venerated it or offered sacrifices around it. There are a great many stories connected with it, but there does not appear to be any real foundation for them. It unquestionably bears some very close relationship to the early Indians in this country, but just what, none will probably ever know."

Alvin Bryant Wirt (1954:46) subsequently described this stone as follows:

> The "Standing Stone" was a sandstone pillar, about a foot square, and several feet high, that formerly stood on the south side of the old Cumberland Turnpike, west of the present town of Monterey. Tradition says that the first white men who passed there found two standing stones, which had evidently been set up by human hands, as they were not very large, and under which charcoal was found in the ground.

McClain (1925 cited in Walker 1998) described the stone as a "sphinx-like sculpture which may have belonged to a cultured people long antedating the wild and roaming Indian." According to McClain, one early pioneer stated that the stone resembled "a big gray dog in a sitting position, head and ears up, looking straight out west." It is difficult to place any degree of credence in these latter accounts.

Kempville Standing Stone, Smith County, Tennessee

The Kempville megalith in Smith County, (north-central) Tennessee, is located in a broad and gently undulating field on private property in the northeastern portion of the county north of the Cumberland River and near the route of the historic Avery Trace (also known as the Fort Blount Road or North Carolina Road) authorized in 1787 by the North Carolina legislature (cf. Nance 1998; Smith 1998:986). This standing stone is northwest of the Gladdice community between the Old Gladdice Road to the north and the Little Salt Creek Road to the south. As shown on a Garmin eTrex handheld GPS receiver, this stone is located at latitude 36° 22.128′, longitude 85° 50.196′. There are several historic era stone fences (cf. Ball et al. 2008) on the farm and it is possible that a nearby double fence (the long axis of which is generally oriented to the megalith) marks a

Figure 2. Oblique view of Kempville (Smith County, Tennessee) megalith.

portion of the now long abandoned route of the Avery Trace. The Kempville stone (Figure 2) stands approximately 2.1 m (7 ft) high, has a maximum width of about 0.9 m (3 ft), and a maximum thickness of about 30.5 cm (1 ft). Various fist- to melon-sized rocks near the foot of the "front" flat surface of this megalith were likely used to stabilize it in its upright position after it was set in place. The rough configuration of this piece suggests that it was minimally (if at all) shaped prior to its placement. There is no evidence of any discernable markings or inscriptions on either face of this limestone slab. This stone is said to have been briefly described in an article which appeared in a 1970s issue of the Carthage Courier newspaper. Based upon his longstanding interest in local history, Mr. George Heinrich, the owner of this site, believes that this stone was erected as a marker along the route of the Avery Trace (personal communication, July 26, 2010) (Figure 3). Mr. Heinrich further remarked that he had walked the area surrounding the megalith on a number of occasions and found no evidence of prehistoric occupation. His use of a metal detector in the area adjacent to this stone resulted in recovering only one item – a rusted horseshoe.

Difficult Standing Stone, Smith County, Tennessee

The megalith located in the oddly named community of Difficult in northeastern Smith County, Tennessee, is situated about 4.3 km (2.7 miles) due west of the Kempville stone (see above). As indicated on a Garmin eTrex handheld GPS receiver, this stone is located at latitude 36° 22.027′, longitude 85° 50.487′. The Difficult megalith is a small and irregularly shaped but roughly pyramidal limestone slab which stands about 0.8 m (2.5 ft) in height and has a maximum width of about 0.8 m (2.5 ft) and maximum thickness of approximately 0.6 m (2 ft) (Figure 4). No markings were visible on any exposed surface of this stone. A small late prehistoric Mississippian era village is said to be located several hundred feet east of this stone along a tributary to Defeated Creek but there is no presently known cultural affiliation between the two. This stone stands in the front yard of a private residence (not visible from the main road) located on a gentle ridge between Defeated Creek and its tributary. No comparable large rocks were noted in the immediately adjacent yard area. One local property owner has interpreted the Kempville stone as a five-mile marker and the shorter Difficult stone as a one-mile marker along the aforementioned Avery Trace but this contention would be impossible to prove on the basis of presently available information. A second (and similarly sized) small standing stone also thought to be associated with the Avery Trace is reputed to stand about 3.2 km (2 miles) north of Difficult. This location could not be further verified.

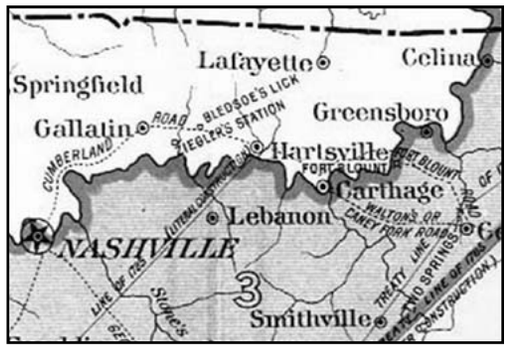

Figure 3. Map of a portion of the Cumberland River Valley in north-central Tennessee. Note route of Fort Blount Road (Avery Trace) immediately west of Fort Blount and north of Cumberland River. This route heads to Kempville. The Kempville megalith is located near the second "l" in Hartsville (reproduced from Royce 1902:Plate CLXI).

Figure 4. Side view of standing stone in Difficult, (Smith County) Tennessee.

Site 1Cy225, Talladega National Forest, Clay County, Alabama

At present, six megaliths are known within the state of Alabama. The first of these is located in the Talladega National Forest in Clay County in the east-central portion of the state. Made of schist, this example (Figure 5) is likely of prehistoric origin. Holstein (2007:27) has observed that:

> …archaeologists have recently been surveying portions of the rugged Talladega National Forest and they, too, have recorded several stone mounds and walls. …One interesting site was 1Cy225, which was a singular stone mound on an upland crest of one of the highest peaks in the forest. This mound was unusual because it had a large stone obelisk standing straight up in the center (Noel et al. 2004).

The Alabama State Site File form provides but little additional information concerning this stone. As noted therein: "The stone mound is located on top of Horn Mtn. within a stone outcropping. Ground cover consists of mixed hardwood and pine with some secondary growth. Stone mounds such as this are not uncommon to this area, however, the origin of this stone mound is unknown."

Site 1Ra28, Rother L. Harris Reservoir, Randolph County, Alabama

A second Alabama megalith was recorded at the Nelson's Bend rock shelter (1Ra28) in the Rother L. Harris Reservoir in Randolph County in the east-central portion of the state immediately west of the Alabama-Georgia state line. The dimensions of this stone were not specifically recorded although a photograph of it (Figure 6) suggests an aboveground height of at least 1.8 m (6 ft) if not somewhat higher. As

Figure 5. Megalith at site 1Cy225, Clay County, Alabama (reproduced with permission from Holstein 2007:25).

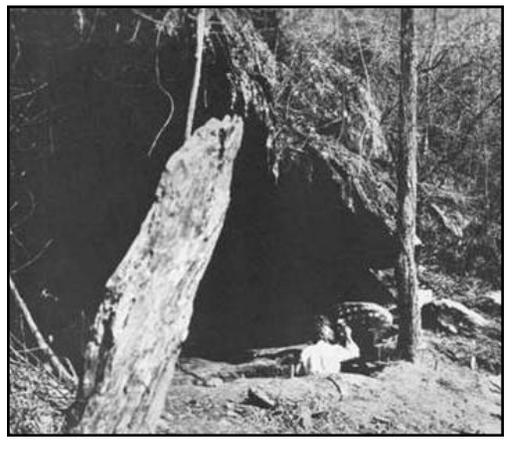

Figure 6. Megalith at Nelson's Bend rock shelter (1Ra28), Randolph County, Alabama (reproduced courtesy of Dr. Vernon James Knight, Jr.).

Feature 1 is a large, irregular upright schist slab present on the western side of the talus slope. This slab …was dubbed the "monolith" by the field crew and is designated as Feature 1. It slants outward toward the [Little Tallapoosa] river at an angle of about 75 degrees from horizontal. Two small test units placed at the base of Feature 1 showed that the Avery complex deposits had been formed after the slab was already in its present position, but the test was inconclusive in determining whether it had been erected aboriginally or had somehow naturally assumed vertical orientation. It might have served as an excellent marker, being clearly visible from the river.

Significantly, Knight (1977:195) continued by observing that:

…Five unmodified large schist slabs, present on the eastern side of the talus slope, were designated as Feature 3. It might be conjectured whether one or more of these slabs had once stood upright as an eastern counterpart of Feature 1.

As the Avery complex has been dated from ca. AD 1400-1600 (Hubbert and Wright 1987:5; Knight 1980:2, 14-23; 1994:185), it may be conjectured that the 1Ra28 megalith was erected during or before the early Mississippian era as suggested by a single radiocarbon date of AD 1150±70 obtained from this site (Hubbert and Wright 1987:5). The reason(s) for erecting a megalith at this location are obscured by virtue of the site being a rock shelter situated near a fish weir (designated as site 1Ra208) intimating a predominately mundane and non-ceremonial function (Hubbert and Wright 1987:7-8). When asked "Were there any markings on either face of this piece?", Dr. Vernon James Knight, Jr. (personal communication, July 19, 2010) responded, "If there had been any deliberate modification of the stone, I'm sure that would have been mentioned [in the original report]."

Site 1Ta719, Talladega National Forest, Talladega County, Alabama

The third recorded Alabama megalith (Figure 7) was reported within the Talladega National Forest in east-central Alabama along a first terrace overlooking the Tallaseehatchee Creek in Talladega County. This thick tabular slab is made of locally available schist and measures approximately 0.9 m (3 ft) at the base by 1 to 1.2 m (3.5 to 4 ft) in height. Nine stone mounds and one stone wall were also recorded upon a ridge spur slope directly behind this standing stone. This stone is likely prehistoric in origin (Ridley 2008).

Site 1Ta756, Talladega National Forest, Talladega County, Alabama

The fourth recorded Alabama megalith (Figure 8) was reported within the Talladega National Forest in east-central Alabama along a first terrace overlooking a seasonal drainage in Talladega County. This thick tabular slab was made of locally available greenstone[3], a type of

Figure 7. Megalith at site 1TA719, Talladega National Forest, Talladega County, Alabama (reproduced courtesy of Dr. Harry O. Holstein).

schist, and measures approximately 1.2 m (4 ft) at the base by 0.9 m (3 ft) in height. Numerous readily available slabs of greenstone were observed lying in the adjacent streambed. Also of interest, this stone appears to have been bifacially chipped (Ridley 2009).

Site 1Le307, Lee County, Alabama

The fifth formally recorded Alabama megalith is located south of Sougahatchee Creek in Lee County, also in the east-central portion of the state. As noted in the Alabama State Site File form, this site and its associated megalith have been described as follows:

Site 1Le307 was recorded by John Newman, Office of Archaeological Research, Moundville, AL. The site is a very sparse surface scatter of quartzite debitage (N=3) and a possible 19th century stone mound burial. The site is situated on an upland crest with two logging roads dissecting the landform. The area has been clear-cut in the past, resulting in severe erosion. Shovel testing profiles show no topsoil with light reddish-brown subsoil at the surface across the site. No artifacts were recovered in these shovel tests. The stone mound consists of an oval shaped arrangement of cobbles set with an east to west orientation. A large stone is placed vertically at the western end of the mound. The form is common to known 19th century burials within the area (John Cottier, personal communication 2001). The likelihood that the stone mound is a 19th century burial results in the recommendation of avoidance. … The practice of burial within mounds has been employed during prehistory, but the inclusion of an east to west orientation implies post-Christian-missionary cultural developments. Couples [sic] with the presence of the headstone, the implications are further narrowed to a Christian burial sometime during the 19th or early 20th century… [emphasis added].

Figure 8. Megalith made of greenstone at site 1Ta756, Talladega National Forest, Talladega County, Alabama (reproduced courtesy of Dr. Harry O. Holstein).

Available information suggests that this stone serves as a cautionary tale demonstrating the appropriateness of being slow to judge the presumed antiquity of those few megaliths encountered across the landscape. This site and its associated megalith are further discussed in Jones (2002), Newman et al. (2002), and Watkins (2003).

Site 1Ca887, Calhoun County, Alabama

In the course of an informal personal communication on January 27, 2011, Dr. Harry O. Holstein (Archaeological Resource Laboratory, Jacksonville State University, Anniston, Alabama) brought to our attention a sixth Alabama megalith (Figure 9) located at site 1Ca887 in Calhoun County in the east-central portion of the state. His remarks appear herein with his permission to serve as an interim account of its presence within the region:

Figure 9. Side view of standing stone at site 1Ca887, on Choccolocco Mountain, Calhoun County, Alabama (reproduced courtesy of Dr. Harry O. Holstein).

Recently we have located another standing stone structure amongst a strange rock outcrop on an isolated western ridge spur atop Choccolocco Mountain in Calhoun County Alabama. The standing rock is oriented due east/west and points out over the steep mountain slope off to the west between two distant mountain peaks. The thick tabular sandstone rock measures 3 feet at the base by 2 feet at its highest point varying in thickness from 3 inches at the top to 10 inches near the eastern base. A low loose angular sandstone wall runs directly north of the tip of the west end of the standing stone. This site lies less than one-half mile north of the recently investigated large complex Morton Hill stone structure site, 1Ca671 (Holstein 2010).

Site 9Un367, Track Rock Gap, Union County, Georgia

Two possible megaliths have been reported at Track Rock Gap in Union County, (north-central) Georgia. As recorded by Muller (2009):

> Within the past seven years, a few careful excavations, several of which have occurred at a single site, have resulted in one cautionary tale, important observations, and discoveries. In 2002, Johannes Loubser and T. G. Greiner [Loubser and Greiner 2002] produced a report on a site in Track Rock Gap in north central Georgia. This site, on the east side of the Gap, consists of dozens of terrace walls and cairns that had been earlier discovered by Carey Waldrip, a resident of a nearby town, Blairsville. Loubser dated one wall by removing soil underneath it and having it tested using oxidizable carbon ratio (OCR)[4]. The date obtained was ca. 1075 B.P. Nearby, a 4.5m x 3m x .7m [14.8 ft x 9.8 ft x 2.3 ft] stone mound on a high promontory was excavated. *Two column-shaped rocks were lying on the south side of the pile which Loubser interpreted might once have "stood upright in a monolith fashion."* After removing the top layer of stones, Loubser uncovered diagnostic artifacts underneath that confirmed the accuracy of the OCR date for the wall [emphasis added].

In the course of seeking clarification regarding the nature of the recovered "diagnostic artifacts" from this site, Dr. Johannes Loubser (personal communication, June 18, 2010) replied:

> Perhaps the sentence should read: "After removing the layered flat stones from the low mound, Loubser uncovered a small feature enclosed by a ring of round-edged stones. Within the stone ring was black-colored soil. Artifacts recovered from the dark feature fill included a Connestee-looking fabric impressed sherd, a bowl fragment of a ceramic clay smoking pipe (resembling Mississippian period ones), some plain sherds, and a few quartz flake fragments. Bearing in mind that Connestee probably dates to around 1,000 years ago, the feature may have been in use at that time. However, it is known from other similar features within stone mounds in Georgia that much older artifacts are often included, so the feature date depends on the latest artifact recovered from within or on the radiocarbon date of charcoal recovered. Since only about a quarter of the feature was sampled (due to Indian requests excavations were terminated), it may very well contain more recent artifacts. Based on available evidence, however, the latest diagnostic artifacts (i.e., the Connestee sherd and the pipe fragment) recovered from within the feature suggests a Late Woodland/Early Mississippian date. This age estimate roughly agrees in age (this is different from confirming it) with the OCR estimate of a soil sample that underlies a meandering stone wall very many meters down slope and northwest of the piled stone mound. The petroglyphs to the northwest of the stone-walled complex, within Track Rock Gap [cf. Loubser 2010], contain designs that resemble Woodland/Mississippian period ones. So, all-in-all we have circumstantial evidence that a lot of activity occurred here roughly a millennium ago. It should not be forgotten that sites can be re-visited and re-used through time, so features can be added, such as the monoliths."

Loubser and Frink (2010:34) further elaborated on these examples by observing, "Two column-shaped rocks, each measuring roughly 100 by 40 cm [3.3 ft x 1.3 ft], are present on the southern side of the pile. These might have stood upright in a monolith-like fashion." These stones were made of metamorphic rock (or perhaps biotite) (Johannes Loubser, personal communication, May 30, 2010).

Stonewall Resort State Park, Lewis County, West Virginia

A large standing slab of stone (sandstone?) located near a complex of approximately 150 walls, platforms, and cairns has been reported at the Stonewall Resort State Park, Lewis County, (north-central) West Virginia (Fitzwater 2010; see also Steelhammer 2010). Presumably raised by human hands, this imposing upright stone (Figure 10) has been described as sitting "…beneath a natural outcrop of rock that is surrounded by large boulders" (Fitzwater 2010). The chronology of this and the associated stone works is unknown but likely of prehistoric origin. Measuring on the order of 8 feet in height by 10 feet across, this sizable upright stone generally resembles those reported at sites 1Ta756 and 1Ca887 in east-central Alabama (see above). The broad "front" surface of the stone is marked with several cupules (indentations) but some of these are likely of historic origin as a result of gun shots.

Juniata Standing Stone, Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania

The Juniata Standing Stone – now no longer standing – was located at the confluence of Standing Stone Creek and the Juniata River (a tributary of the Susquehanna River) in Huntingdon County, (south-central) Pennsylvania. Myer (n.d.a:Chapter V) remarked that:

Figure 10. Front view of Stonewall State Resort Park megalith in Lewis County, West Virginia. Note cupules on exposed surface (reproduced courtesy of Mr. Roger B. Wise).

An interesting sidelight is thrown on this ancient Tennessee standing stone [in Putnam County] by an account of a similar standing stone in the Juniata River Valley of Pennsylvania. John Harris, in describing a journey along the Juniata in 1753, says, "To standing stone, 10 miles (about fourteen feet high; six inches square)." Hanna [1911:257] says with reference to this standing stone, "At one time it was covered with inscriptions, and venerated as a sacred totem pole." It was described as being seven feet above the ground in 1775. Juniata is a corrupted form of the Iroquois "Onoputta," meaning standing stone. Oneida is another form of the same word and has the same meaning [Hanna 1911:257].

As recorded in greater detail by historian John W. Jordan in A History of the Juniata Valley and Its People (Jordan 1913:I, 20):

It is believed that the Juniata or Standing Stone people had their great council fire where the city of Huntingdon is now located. Here they erected a pillar of stone – quite likely to commemorate the fact, as they believed, that it was upon that spot that the Great Spirit caused them to spring from mother earth like the trees of the forest. The first mention in the white man's history of the Standing Stone is in a journal of Conrad Weiser, Indian agent and interpreter, recording the events of a journey from his home in Berks county [sic], Pennsylvania, to the forks of the Allegheny and Muskingum rivers. The entry in this journal for August 18, 1748, says: "Had a great rain in the afternoon; came within two miles of Standing Stone, twenty-four miles." Five or six years later John Harris, the founder of Harrisburg, visited the spot and described the stone as "about fourteen feet high and six inches square." In 1843 Sherman Day [Day 1843:370] gathered all the traditions possible concerning the stone. He says is was "four inches thick by eight inches wide," and adds: "The tribe regarded this stone with superstitious veneration, and a tradition is said to have existed among them that if the stone should be taken away the tribe would be dispersed, but so long as it should stand they would prosper." The souvenir edition of "Historic Huntingdon," published in 1909, says: "Arching around a tall, slim pillar covered with hieroglyphics, were wigwams or lodges of the browned sons of the forest. …The stone referred to, which was supposed to bear in its cabalistic inscriptions a record of the history and achievements of the tribe, was regarded with great veneration by the natives, and it conspicuous position and appearance led the white visitors to designate the locality by the name 'Standing Stone.' This stone stood above Second street [sic] between the Pennsylvania railroad and the river, on or near No. 208 Allegheny street," etc.

Early sources often conflict with one another regarding both the dimensions of the stone and the circumstances surrounding its demise. Some claim that the local tribe removed it to an unknown location for safekeeping whereas others say that it was demolished by either the Indians themselves or a group of drunken town's people with nothing better to do with their time. It is not known which – if any – of these accounts is true. A replacement stone (Figure 11) was erected by the town of Huntingdon on September 8, 1896. The history of the original Juniata stone is further discussed in Africa (1896), Day (1843:370), Egle (1876:778-779), Jones (1856:183-185), Jordan (1913:I, 19-22), and Moran et al. (2005:46-47).

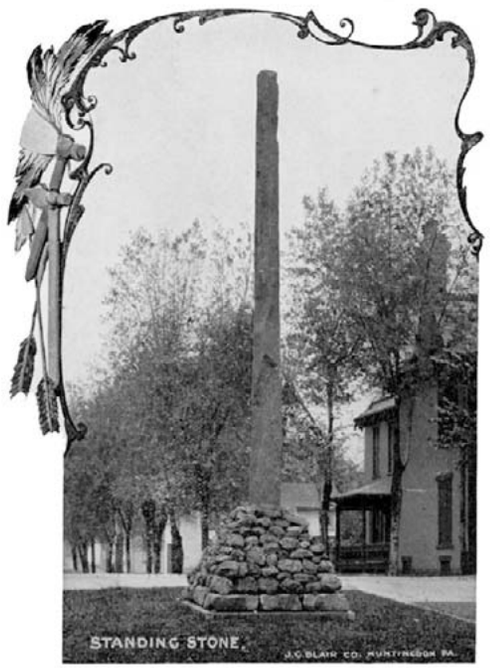

Figure 11. Replacement Juniata Standing Stone erected in 1896 (reproduced from Historical Committee of the Old Home Week Association 1909).

Montour Trail, South Park near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

A second apparent megalith in Pennsylvania was briefly reported in the October 8, 2009, issue of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette newspaper and described as being along Montour Trail (a public pathway) immediately adjacent to Peters Creek. Specific location information was purposefully vague but the Peters Creek watershed lies in south-central Allegheny County and north-central Washington County near Pittsburgh in the southwestern portion of the state. As described by Zuchowski (2009):

In mid-August, Finleyville resident Larry Gallant decided to veer off the well-traveled Montour Trail by taking a neglected side path.

"The trail is only about a foot wide and not very often used," said Mr. Gallant, a historian and member of the Peters Creek Historical Society.

The path rose up hill to a bluff, and when Mr. Gallant approached Peters Creek, he came across a rather startling sight – a monolith that he believes could weigh as much as a ton and once stood on top the bluff but either tumbled or was dragged 23 feet down the embankment.

"The base of the stone sticks two feet out of the ground with another four feet embedded in the creek bed," he said. "Another eight feet of the obelisk, which comes to a point, lies in the creek."

Discussion

It is appropriate to comment upon both the material and construction of these stones. Available (but less than precise) information suggests that five examples (Putnam County, Tennessee, 1Ca887 in Alabama, Juniata Valley, Pennsylvania, and likely Montour Trail, Pennsylvania, and Stonewall Resort State Park, West Virginia) were made of sandstone, two (Kempville and Difficult, both in Smith County, Tennessee) of limestone, three (1Cy225, 1Ra28, and 1Ta719 in Alabama) of schist, one of greenstone (1Ta756 in Alabama), and two (both in Union County, Georgia) of metamorphic rock. The material of the Lee County, Alabama, example was not further described. Importantly, it seems reasonable to conclude that all 14 megaliths used readily available local material and there is no firm evidence to suggest that these stones were transported any further than was absolutely necessary to accomplish the desired goal of erecting a suitable marker. In support of this contention, Dr. Harry O. Holstein (personal communication, January 27, 2011) remarked that:

described in Knight (1977:195; see also Knight and O'Hear 1975:84):

> …all 150 or so stone structure sites JSU [Jacksonville State University] has recorded and numerous others I have visited were all constructed of rocks from the immediate vicinity. Occasionally one or two non-indigenous rocks (clear quartz etc.) will be added to a structure but 99% plus [are] of local materials.

Although there is no way to determine how these stones may have been transported, short of sheer brute strength, it seems reasonable to conjecture that in at least some instances wooden rollers may have been used to move them (cf. Osenton 2001). As best exemplified by the Kempville megalith in Smith County, Tennessee, it is not unlikely that the process of erecting several of these stones entailed excavating a sloping trench, carefully setting the heel (bottom) of the megalith in place and moving it to an upright position, packing the sloping cavity with stray rocks to secure it, and dumping loose dirt in the residual trench. It may be further speculated that one-fourth to one-third of the mass of most of these stones was situated belowground level to insure its stability.

In marked contrast to the apparent rarity of presently known megaliths within the region, there is no doubt that likely thousands of stone mounds, walls, enclosures, effigies, and cairns were erected by the prehistoric inhabitants of the region extending from the Ohio River Valley to the southern terminus of the Appalachian foothills[5]. While their specific temporal and cultural relationship to several of the megaliths described herein remains unknown, there is little uncertainty that all were part of a longstanding and widely distributed tradition of stone construction in the Upland South. Although no end of colorful and fanciful speculations might be offered regarding the history and function of megaliths in the Upland South, factual information concerning them is much harder to find. Excluding a possible association with a historic tribe in the Juniata River Valley in Pennsylvania, it appears that most of the Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and West Virginia examples are likely of prehistoric origin. Plausible – but by no means provable – functions might include uses such as a marker for tribal boundaries, trails, or ceremonial sites. Whatever their function might have been, there is no substantive reason to suggest that such readily obvious markers would have failed to attract the attention of early explorers, military expeditions, and settlers had they been more plentiful. Obviously, such was not the case. The paucity of these imposing stones[6] argues against their having served as prehistoric trail markers (cf. Myer 1928; n.d.b) and it is equally improbable that they would have functioned as boundary markers[7] in light of the sizable tracts of land that might have been claimed by any given tribal group. Excluding those stones possibly associated with various historical purposes, it seems most likely (but, again, by no means conclusively provable) that they typically served to mark the location of sites used for as yet unknown ritual purposes. The validity of this contention (while not, we believe, completely without some degree of merit) certainly remains subject to further verification and in the process of formulating the present interpretive remarks we have been mindful of the admonition voiced by Philip E. Smith (1962:34) in his landmark study titled Aboriginal Stone Constructions in the Southern Piedmont:

> It has become something of a standing joke among archaeologists to maintain that when a phenomenon cannot be explained in any other way it can always be labeled "ceremonial" and allowed to go at that. This is taking the easy way out, of course, and in many cases it does represent sloppy or unimaginative thinking. Therefore, we realize that we are leaving ourselves quite vulnerable to attack and criticism on this score when we suggest that, in our opinion, the structures under discussion are ceremonial in nature, or at the very least represent some form of symbolic rather than strictly utilitarian behavior [emphasis in original text].

In this vein of thought, discounting its smaller size, an 1870s account of a stone venerated by the Lakota Sioux on the Standing Rock reservation situated on the North Dakota and South Dakota state line provides a useful ethnographic analogy for interpreting at least some of the known standing stones in the Upland South region. As recorded by Leasure (1877:387-388):

> Next morning (Sunday) we arrived at the [Standing Rock] agency, and in company with a friend from Bismarck, I stopped off to await the return of the boat from below. I had imagined that the name Standing Rock was derived from some immense rock on the river shore, or some overhanging cliff constituting the main feature of the spot, and on inquiry, I was informed that the rock was some distance inland. Major Burke, the agent, was absent, [page 388] but his son very kindly took us in an open spring wagon, through the various villages of the Indians, up to the lodge of Two Bears, head chief of the Yanktonnais, about four miles from the agency buildings. On our way up he stopped and told us that there was the Standing Rock. It was a little boulder about twenty-eight inches in height, by fifteen inches at the base, and eight inches at the top, and was painted over in various colors, and surrounded by pieces of gay colored ribbons, bead work and the ears and tails of small animals, and other tokens, indicating that the Indian women looked upon it as sacred, and came "to make medicine," in their domestic troubles, or in "white man's talk," to offer sacrifice [emphasis in original text].
>
> The story or myth of Standing Rock is quite as respectable as many another found in the traditions of savage or semi-barbarian people. It is to the effect that "once upon a time," a young Arickaree [Arikara] woman, wife of a great brave, and who loved him dearly, was so mortified and spirit broken because her husband took a second wife, that she went out on the prairie and sat down and neither ate nor drank till she died, and the Great Spirit turned her into that standing stone. To this day, the women of a hostile tribe, the Sioux, who now occupy the country, hold it as a sacred thing, and offer to it their sacrifices to propitiate it, and secure its good offices for them in their no doubt sufficiently frequent little domestic difficulties. A man of ordinary strength could carry the stone away, but no one has ever molested it, and it remains a pillar of rock to mark the credulity of a simple and superstitious people[8].

Geographically closer to the Appalachian region, Captain John Smith (1612) recorded the following brief description of the use of ceremonial stones by the Indians of eastern Virginia:

> They have also certaine Altar stones they call Pawcorances: but these stand from their Temples, some by their houses, other in the woodes and wildernesses. Upon these, they offer blood, deare suet, and Tobacco. These they doe when they returne from the warres, from hunting, and upon many other occasions [emphasis in original; original spelling retained].

Of necessity, efforts to date such stones in the Upland South based upon presently available meager information must be tenuous at best. A scattering of associated dates derived from the megaliths or their associated sites in Randolph County, Alabama, Union County, Georgia, and Citrus County, Florida (see below), suggests – but by no means substantiates – that some megaliths in the southeastern

United States were erected from more or less the middle of the fifth century AD to as late as ca. 1150 or in general terms from the terminal Middle Woodland well into the early portion of the Mississippian period. As demonstrated all too well by the standing stone in Lee County, Alabama (which possibly served as a nineteenth century grave marker) and the two examples in Smith County, Tennessee (likely erected as early road markers), it is prudent to exert a healthy degree of both skepticism and caution in reaching unsupportable conclusions regarding both the age and function of any given example which might be encountered.

Beyond the more obvious issues such as chronology, cultural affiliation, and function, it is inevitable that a number of additional questions such as access and frequency of use might be raised regarding megaliths in the Upland South. While giving voice to such questions is easy enough, providing convincing and supportable answers is another matter. It may be argued, for example, that this or that megalith stood adjacent to a given trail known in the early historic era. However, lacking any firm (or even tentative) insight as to either when a particular stone was erected or when a nearby trail was established modern researchers find themselves in the position of accepting the untenable premise that "once in use as a ritual site, always in use," a leap of interpretive faith which may or may not have any basis in ethnographic reality. A not inappropriate modern analogy to this scenario may be found in driving past a derelict and long abandoned church beside a country road. Although such a neglected structure was once a place of active worship, it now stands unused and ignored and it matters little that it is located adjacent to a still traveled byway. It is therefore within the bounds of reason to hypothesize that if once sacred mound centers (cf. Halley, ed. 1994; King 2003; Knight and Steponaitis, eds. 1998) and ceremonial caves (cf. Faulkner, ed. 1986; Faulkner et. al. 1984; Faulkner and Simek 1996) within the region fell out of favor and into disuse that a similar fate could have befallen megaliths erected for ceremonial purposes within the same geographical area.

Another issue worthy of being addressed is the problem of establishing an interim typology of regional megaliths. As documented herein, we begin with a miniscule sample of 14 presently known Upland South megaliths. Since available information suggests (but does not conclusively confirm) that three of these may date to the historic period, we are left with but 11 examples variously found as standalone items (i.e., Standing Stone near Monterey, Tennessee, sites 1Ta719 and 1Ta756 in Alabama, and the Montour Trail stone in Pennsylvania), stones associated with a stone mound and/or in proximity to walls, cairns, etc. (i.e., sites 1Cy225 and 1Ca887 in Alabama, 9Un367 in Georgia, and Stonewall Resort State Park in West Virginia), and stones within habitation areas (i.e., site 1Ra28 in Alabama and the Juniata standing stone in Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania). Inasmuch as these are valid descriptive observations, it should be recognized that presently available information fails to provide any meaningful insight into the specifics of their intended purpose and there is no compelling reason to presume that each and every stone served an identical role for the group which erected it. It is therefore appropriate to ask, "In the establishment of even a provisional typology, which is more important – a megalith's setting or its function?" Regional archaeologists are nowhere near being able to answer such a question at this time.

Intimately related to understanding the function of any given stone is the process of coming to terms with the factors which prompted the erection of a megalith at one location rather than another. While it is all too easy to espouse (but infinitely more difficult to prove) theories focusing on astrological or cardinal alignments or vaguely defined concepts of "sacred space," it would be ill-advised to arbitrarily dismiss

the importance of mythology and cosmology (cf. Mooney 1900; Swanton 1927, 1929) as integral elements in influencing the selection of particular sites as being worthy of veneration. Inasmuch as the operable intangible ideas which motivated site selection may never be fully understood, it remains within the bounds of possibility to examine the tangible expression of those ideas as manifested by the physical and locational similarities between and among the known universe of recorded stones.

Briefly addressing the perplexing question of distribution within the broad expanses of the Upland South where stone is readily available is likewise in order. Although an uncritical acceptance of the information presented herein would suggest that the hill country of east-central Alabama was – for whatever reason – a proverbial epicenter of megalith construction, it is equally valid to contend that additional examples within the region have yet to be discovered and reported. For all practical purposes, substantial portions of northern Alabama, northern Georgia, central and eastern Tennessee, western South Carolina, western North Carolina, eastern Kentucky, western Virginia, and much of West Virginia remain terra incognito as regards the presence or absence of megaliths in the prehistoric past.

Other questions might be raised as well. While it is reasonable enough to conclude that the erection of megaliths in the Upland South was dependent upon proximity to a convenient source of readily accessible stone – a circumstance seldom encountered in many portions of the Lowland South – mention should be made of the apparent application of substitute materials. An insight into the fabrication and use of what may be interpreted as wooden counterparts to stone megaliths as used along the coast of North Carolina in the period 1585-1586 (Hariot 1871:Plate XVIII) appears in the writings of Thomas Hariot (later translated from Latin into English by Richard Hakluyt) who remarked that:

> At a Certayne tyme of the yere they make a great, and solemne feaste wherunto their neighbours of the townes adioninge repayre from all parts euery man attyred in the most strange fashion they can deuise hauinge certayne marks on the backs to declare of what place they bee. The place where they meet is a broade playne, abowt the which are planted in the grownde certayne posts carued with heads like to the faces of Nonnes couered with theyr vayles. Then beeing sett in order they dance, singe, and vse the strangest gestures that they can possiblye deuise. Three of the fayrest Virgins, of the companie are in the mydds, which imbrassinge one another doe as yt wear turne abowt in their dancinge. All this is donne after the sunne is sett for auoydinge of heate. When they are weerye of dancing, they goe oute of the circle, and come in vntill their dances be ended, and they goe to make merrye… (Hariot 1871:description of Plate XVIII).
>
> (At a certain time of the year they make a great and solemn feast whereunto their neighbors of the towns adjoining repair from all parts every man attired in the most strange fashion they can devise having certain markings on their backs to declare what place they be [from]. The place where they meet is a broad plain, about which are planted in the ground certain posts carved with heads like the faces of nuns covered with their veils. Then being set in order they dance, sing, and use the strangest gestures they can possibly devise. Three of the fairest virgins of the company are in the middle which embracing one another do as it were turn about in their dancing. All this is done after the sun is set for avoiding the heat. When they were weary of dancing, they go out of the circle, and come in until the dances be ended, and they go to make merry…)

Equally informative is a first person account of the ceremonies associated with a portable

wooden pole at the Indian town of Jece near present day Vero Beach along Florida's Atlantic coast. This town was the principal village of the Ais, one of the lesser known tribes in southern Florida (cf. Andrews and Andrews, eds. 1985:93-109; Swanton 1946:84-85). As recorded in early October 1696 by Jonathan Dickinson, a Quaker merchant shipwrecked near Hobe Sound in Martin County, Florida (Andrews and Andrews, eds. 1985:37-38):

> This day being the time of the moon's entering the first quarter, the Indians have a ceremonious dance which they begin about eight o'clock in the morning. In the first place comes an old man and takes a staff about eight feet long, having a broad arrow on the head thereof, and thence half way painted red and white like unto a barber's pole; in the middle of this staff is fixed a piece of wood shaped like unto [the] thigh, leg and foot of a man, and the lower part thereof is painted black, and this staff being carried out of the Casseekey's [i.e., chief's] house is set fast in the ground standing upright. This done, he also brings out a basket containing six rattles, which are taken out [page 38] of the basket and placed at the foot of his staff; then another old man comes and sets up a howling like unto a mighty dog, but beyond him for length of breath; withal making a proclamation. This being done, the most of them having painted themselves some red, some black, some with black and red; with their belly girt up as tight as well they can girt themselves with ropes, having their sheaves of arrows at their backs and their bows in their hands, being gathered together about this staff; six of the chiefest men in esteem among them, especially one who is their doctor, and much esteemed, taking up the rattles begins a hideous noise, standing round this staff, taking their rattles, and bowing, without ceasing, unto the staff for about half an hour; whilst these six are thus employed, all the rest are staring and scratching, pointing upwards and downward on this and the other side every way; looking like men frightened, or more like Furies; thus behaving themselves until the six have done shaking their rattles. Then they all begin a dance, violently stamping on the ground for the space of an hour or more without ceasing. In which time they will sweat in a most excessive manner, that by the time the dance is over, what by their sweat and the violent stamping of their feet, the ground is trodden into furrows… Thus often repeating the manner they continue till three or four o'clock in the afternoon; by which time many were sick and fainty…
>
> The next day about the same time, they begin their dance as the day before. Also on the third day they begin their dance at the usual time; at which time came many Indians from other towns, and fell to dancing without taking any notice one of the other.

Accordingly, it is not inappropriate to contend that the general function of a "megalith"—providing a symbolic focal point for the conduct of a given ritual or celebration—was independent of the material used in fabricating such a visual marker. Although it is obvious that the use of stone would have resulted in a far more durable marker, the application of non-permanent material would have served the same purpose. It may further be speculated that the remnants of such markers in the form of seemingly inexplicable stray post molds encountered in village contexts have been discovered in the course of numerous excavations in the southeastern United States but have gone unrecognized or misinterpreted.

As a final observation, it may be noted that the study of standing stones and other examples of early stone structures has tended to attract more concerted attention in New England (e.g., Finch 1824; Gage and Gage 2006, 2008; Muller 2009) and the northeast (e.g., Letson 1905:26, 30-32, 45, Plate 12; Mercer 1897:155; Muller 2008)[9] than elsewhere in the eastern United States. For example, in an account of the Burnt Hill site located on "a mountaintop in the northern Berkshires" near Heath, (northwestern) Massachusetts, Anonymous (1971 cited in Corliss 1978:2) recorded "…a half-dozen standing stones, shaped and tapered to points …and set up on the crest of a mountain in a pattern suggesting orientation on the celestial North Pole. In addition, there are about 15 stones that have fallen, including a giant menhir 17½ feet long." As suggestive as some similarities between their appearance and construction may be, there is no firm evidence that they are either chronologically or functionally comparable to ostensibly identical stones encountered south of the Ohio Valley.

Within the southern states, it may be argued that the examples best known to regional archaeologists are two limestone stelae about five feet high (one dated to ca. AD 440) discovered at the Crystal River Archaeological State Park in Citrus County, (west-central) Florida, near the Gulf Coast (Bullen 1966)[10]. Despite the infrequency of their appearance in the Upland South as suggested by the cited historical and archaeological literature, it is both likely and probable that other megaliths have been reported in sources not examined herein and, indeed, additional examples which have not yet attracted the attention of regional archaeologists and historians may exist scattered across the landscape[11]. Nonetheless, even were the number of these stones doubled or tripled it is ironic that they would still be fewer in number than items such as seldom encountered Mississippian era monolithic axes (cf. Brehm and Smotherman 1989; Jones 1876:46; Knight 2000; Miller 1958; see also Saville 1916) within the region. Until such time as these stones are systematically investigated, they will continue to remain aberrant curiosities subject to rampant speculation.

Suggestions for the Documentation of Upland South Megaliths

Following the completion of the present study, it seemed appropriate to take the opportunity to both examine the problems we encountered in dealing with the highly variable quality of the purely descriptive information available to us and – importantly – offer some preliminary suggestions as to how these reporting efforts might simultaneously be improved and standardized for the express purpose of allowing for the more uniform and systematic comparison of one stone with another. As is always the case, experience tends to be the best teacher and it is appropriate to observe that it is not our intention to be critical in any manner of the approaches previously used by others (and we certainly include ourselves among this number). To the contrary, we fully recognize that the methodical investigation of megaliths in both the Upland South and elsewhere in the United States is in its infancy and in many regards exemplifies the challenge of venturing into heretofore uncharted academic waters.

That there are no recognized reporting standards for documenting megaliths within the region is hardly surprising in light of both the infrequency of their occurrence and the general lack of attention previously directed toward their study. To this end, we would recommend that the following observations be considered as the minimum guidelines for future recordation efforts:

Location

1. statement of location (to include both placement on a USGS 7.5' quadrangle and GPS coordinates) and topographic setting;

Photographs

2. clear photographs (preferably including a scale) of all sides of a given megalith;

Description

3. dimensions (height, width, and thickness) of a given megalith;

4. cardinal orientation of the stone's long axis (if applicable);

5. type of stone (limestone, sandstone, etc.);

6. statement regarding the local availability of that type of stone;

7. descriptive narrative including shape, indications of human efforts to shape or alter the stone, and specific observations on the presence or absence of petrogylphs, inscriptions, carvings, and/or other recognizable markings;

8. specific observations on the presence or absence of cultural debris (e.g., pottery and lithic material);

9. discussion of condition including mention of lichens, salts, cracks, animal activity/nests/droppings, and percentage of the rock feature covered by these (i.e., conditions – including weathering [cf. Bauer et al. 2002] – which might influence future interpretive or conservation efforts; although the cleaning of old stones is briefly discuss in Strangstad [1995:60-63], this procedure is best undertaken only by properly trained individuals);

Cultural and Natural Setting

10. map of site (including scale) showing relationship to both natural and nearby cultural features;

11. comments on association with or proximity to other obvious or likely cultural features (e.g., stone mounds, walls, cairns, etc.);

12. an assessment (if possible) of how the stone was optimally viewed (e.g., standing, squatting, lying down, or some other position) by those who used it; how far away from the rock feature does one stand to optimally view it; and does one have to look up, down, or level; and

Summary of Previous Research

13. an appropriate records review (including the collection of local folklore and oral history, if applicable) of both archaeological and historical sources relating to a given stone.

It may be taken for granted that every stone is unique in its own right and other attributes of a given megalith or its location may warrant further discussion. Such factors might include remarks on how one physically approaches the rock feature in question – does one have to walk, scramble, climb, or execute some other movement(s)? Is there any obvious evidence of previous disturbance or looting?

Taking into account how little we presently know about these stones, it seems well-advised to encourage regional archaeologists to consider adopting and actively using a uniform set of reporting standards for these monuments in the process of coming to better understand their role and significance within the cultural context of the peoples who erected them.

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Notes

1. The history and archaeology of Fort Blount, a 1790s territorial militia and Federal military post in Jackson County, Tennessee, are further investigated in Nance (1998), Smith and Nance, eds. (2000), Smith and Rogers (1989; see also Ezzell 1992), and Wirt (1954:8-11). Situated at a location known as the "Crossing of the Cumberland," an early trail called the Avery Trace ran beside Fort Blount and crossed the Cumberland River at this site (Nance 1998).

2. Laid out from 1799-1801 under the supervision of William Walton, the then newly opened Walton Road was traveled by noted French botanist François André Michaux in 1802 who recorded (Michaux 1904:261-262) the following brief observations:

> The road that crosses this part of the Indian territory cuts through the mountains in Cumberland; it is as broad and commodious as those in the environs of Philadelphia, in consequence of the amazing number of emigrants that travel through it to go and settle in the western country. It is, notwithstanding, in some places [pg. 262] very rugged, but nothing near so much as the one that leads from Strasburgh to Bedford in Pennsylvania. About forty miles from Nasheville [sic] we met an emigrant family in a carriage, followed by their negroes [sic] on foot, that had performed their journey without any accident. *Little boards painted black and nailed upon the trees every three miles, indicate to travellers [sic] the distance they have to go* [emphasis added].

Of immediate interest herein are both Michaux's description of the wooden signs posted along this route and his lack of mention of the use of such obvious markers as large standing stones. Although the megalith at Standing Stone may have been located near this thoroughfare, there is no compelling reason to believe that it was erected as a road marker. For further information on the history of the Walton Road, see Boniol (1971) and Dickinson (1995, 1998, 2007).

3. Greenstone is perhaps best known as being a material preferred for the production of ungrooved axes although it was also used for the manufacture of other artifact types. General comments on the Hillabee Meta-volcanic Complex – the greenstone deposits east of the Moundville site in central Alabama – appear in Fisher-Carroll et al. (2004) and Welch (1991:136, 184). More detailed discussions of this formation appear in Gall and Steponaitis (2001), Tull et al. (1978), and Wilson (2001). In an early geological survey of Tennessee, Safford (1869:172) briefly remarked on the occurrence of greenstone in Johnson County in the extreme northeastern corner of the state with the comment, "In a southeastern direction from Taylorsville, at a distance of a little more than four miles, a narrow band of gneissoid rocks, with greenstone, is met with." Smith and Moore (1994:201) have noted that greenstone deposits also occur in Polk County, (southeastern) Tennessee. There are likely other deposits of this material sporadically occurring in an elongated geologic band extending from at least as far north as northeastern Tennessee in a generally south-westwardly direction to the Hillabee formation in Alabama.

4. Oxidizable Carbon Ratio (OCR) dating has been described by Feathers (2008:178) as "based on the biodegradation of carbon (as charcoal or soil humate) through time, as expressed as a ratio between oxidizable carbon (measured by wet oxidation methods) and total carbon (measured by loss on ignition)." The accuracy of this dating method has been the subject of some controversy (cf. Feathers 2008:178-179; Frink 1999; Killick et al. 1999). These comments aside, as reported in Wetmore (2002:262), the Connestee Phase in the Appalachian summit region was "First identified as a Late Middle Woodland phase with an estimated termination around 1350 B.P. (Keel 1976:221), this phase appears to have continued several centuries later." Although more recent research has dated this phase from A.D. 200-950 (Wetmore 2002:262-265), these dates are not universally accepted. As noted by Dr. Charles H. Faulkner (personal communication, October 1, 2010), "I don't think Connestee lasted until AD 950, at least not in Tennessee. Dates in the

Little Tennessee Valley hover around AD 400."

5. The literature relating to these early stone (and earth and stone) structures in the Upland South and adjacent areas is voluminous in its own right and includes (but is by no means limited to) sources such as Ball (2010), Brinkley (1880), Conant (1879:45), Cox (1929), de Baillou (1962:16-18), DeJarnette et al. (1973:115-136, 160-166), Edmunds (1890), Faulkner (1968, 1998), Fish et al. (1978:24-36), Fitzwater (2010), Holstein (2007, 2009), Holstein and Little (1985), Holstein et al. (1989), Hudson (2008), Jefferies (1975, 1976), Jefferies and Fish (1978), and Jones (1999:381). Additional sources include Kellar (1960), Kengla (1885), Loubser and Frink (2010), Loubser and Hudson (2005), Lowry (2010), Miller (1959), Muller (2010), Myer (1922:148-149; n.d.a), Niquette (1986), Oakley (1976), Oakley and Futato (1975), Peet (1878:102-105), Robertson (2010), Sanders (1991), Setzler (1930), Shackleton (1893), Smith (1962), Squier and Davis (1848:184-185), Steelhammer (2009, 2010), Stewart (1884), Thomas (1891, 1894:407-411, 435), Webb (1938:159-161, 363), Whisenhunt (2009), Whittlesey (1883:627-628), and Wilkins (1981). The collective significance of this body of literature as it relates to the study of Upland South megaliths should not be taken lightly. The practice of erecting and using standing stones did not exist in a cultural vacuum and they were part and parcel of a well-established architectural tradition which existed prior to their construction and continued long after they had fallen into disuse.

It would be remiss not to observe that there is considerable debate between and among regional archaeologists regarding the origin (prehistoric or historic) of many of these examples of stone architecture, most notably rock mounds which are often attributed to early field clearing activities. This issue is discussed at length in Gresham (1990; see also Whisenhunt 2009). Often cited early accounts supporting the pre- and early-settlement construction of stone mounds by Native Americans include comments by both James Adair and William Bartram. Adair (1930:193-194) remarked that:

> To perpetuate the memory of any remarkable warriors killed in the woods, I must here observe, that every Indian traveller [sic] as he passes that way throws a stone on the place, according as he likes or dislikes the occasion, or manner of the death of the deceased.
>
> In the woods we often see innumerable heaps of small stones in those places, where according to tradition some of their distinguished people were either killed, or buried, till the bones could be gathered: there they add Pelion to Ossa, still increasing each heap, as a lasting monument, and honour to them, and an incentive to great actions.

Bartram (1955:283) noted that along the trading path in North Carolina where General Middleton had killed a great number of Cherokee warriors he "observed on each side of the road many vast heaps of these stones, Indian graves undoubtedly."

6. Researching the distribution of megaliths relying on place names alone is further complicated by the use of the term "Standing Stone" for natural formations such as a prominent sandstone hill near Lancaster, (Fairfield County) Ohio (cf. Stout 1952; see also Howe 1875:161-162), and a large stone in the Susquehanna River near the settlement of Wyalusing in Bradford County, (northeastern) Pennsylvania, described by Sayre (1873:115; see also Inners et al. 2003) as "erect and stationary, measuring forty feet in and out of the water." The phrase "standing stones" has been applied to irregularly shaped natural sandstone pillars (locally known as "tea tables") in eastern Ohio (cf. Murphy 2004). Likewise, the place name "Standing Rock" is used in southeastern Kentucky to designate a "large sandstone slab of several hundred tons which stands on end like a huge grave marker …on top of a mountain" near the convergence of the Lee, Wolfe, and Powell county lines (Rennick 1984:281).

7. For example, Tennessee State Historian Walter T. Durham (2004:28) has remarked, "At Standing Stone one can view a boundary marker stone erected in pre-settlement years by American Indians…" There is no known archaeological or ethnohistorical evidence to support this proposed function. Durham may have been influenced by Smith (1998:986) who observed:

> The earlier northern route from East to Middle Tennessee followed sections of an old Indian trail known as Tollunteeskee's Trail. Long hunter James Smith used this trail as early as 1766. The Cherokees claimed the territory between the Clinch River and a treaty line west of Standing Stone (Monterey) and disputed the right of whites to pass through their land without permission…
>
> In 1787 North Carolina legislators approved a second road act, which again ordered a road [Avery Trace] cut and cleared from the south end of Clinch Mountain to Nashville. Peter Avery blazed a trail to mark the route which crossed the Clinch River near present-day Oak Ridge, passed through Winter's Gap (Oliver Springs), and crossed the Emory River near present-day Wartburg. It passed through present-day Lansing to Johnson's Stand, followed a ridge to Standing Stone (Monterey), and then went on to the Cumberland settlements (Nashville). Major George Walton directed the soldiers working on this earliest road. This northern route was also known as Avery's Trace, the old North Carolina Road, and later Emery Road.

While it is true enough that the Standing Stone which formerly stood near present day Monterey, Tennessee, might have been a convenient and well-known reference point for a late eighteenth century boundary line, Myer's (1928:835; n.d.a:Chapter V) comment that "After it had fallen down some of the early settlers made some excavations under it, and found ashes and charcoal that seemed to have been buried there" suggests that this stone both served some long standing ceremonial function and was in place prior to any historic era Cherokee claim on this area.

8. Lt. William H. Wassell (1894:946) of the United States Army later observed that:

> The standing rock from which the principal Sioux agency takes its name is a large stone. One story makes it a runaway girl turned into stone with her baby on her back when pursued by her father and brothers. Another story makes it originally an Arickaree [sic; Arikara] object of worship that became sacred to the Sioux when a warrior, defiling the idol, was killed shortly afterward by its worshippers. Whatever its origin, it was held in great reverence.

9. Although the focus of this study is directed toward megaliths in the Upland South, it is not inappropriate to insert a series of comments from a paper titled "An Exploration of Durham Cave, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, in 1893" by Henry C. Mercer (1897:154-155) describing "a group of about twenty-five …monoliths" which once stood in a village site near this cave along Durham Creek in the southeastern corner of the state of Pennsylvania:

> According to Mr. Charles Laubach, mounds, trails, clearings, and abundant fire-sites at the spot marked the position of the Indian village referred to in certain Pennsylvanian records of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as Pechequeolin (Pechotwoallenk, where there is a great depression in the land). Anthony Laubach, father of Charles, remembered stone-paved Indian fire-places set along the river margin in the alluvium extending from Riegelsville Bridge to the mouth of Durham Creek. The circular areas, raised about 12 or 18 inches, and about 6 feet in diameter, composed of burnt stones imbedded in ashes, did not extend in a straight line, but were irregularly disposed, and appeared to stop at a place seemingly devoted to the manufacture of arrowheads. Then, beginning again, they continued to the entrance of the cave [Durham Cave]. Seen first about 1812 they remained until 1841, when the great freshet for which that year was famous destroyed them all. The digging of the Delaware and Lackawanna Canal had previously obliterated a large portion of the village site with other fire-places. Cultivation continuing the work of destruction, finally completed it when three mounds on the top of the hill behind the cave, about 20 feet in diameter by 6 to 8 feet high and extending in alignment north and south, were ploughed down by William Walters in 1853-55.
>
> Walters, who had measured before destroying them, had found or noticed nothing in them. An Indian trail had followed the right bank of Durham Creek for some distance inland along its ravine from which another trail, passing through an Indian clearing on the top of the hill above the cave, returned down the slope to the village. When Charles Laubach saw this clearing, — which remained surrounded by a forest as late as 1855, — it comprised about seven acres, and ran from [page 155] east to south in longest diameter. Both in the clearing and close to the neighboring three mounds, grooved stone axes were found, while at a point some distance up the river and close to the present Morgantown Road, Mr. Laubach remembers having seen from twelve to fifteen standing stones, the survivors of a group of about twenty-five formerly observed by Mr. Walters, all of which save one about 3 feet high, now remaining as a boundary mark by the Morgantown roadside and seen by me in 1893, were afterwards used to build the wall of a neighboring barnyard.
>
> The monoliths must have been carried to the spot by Indians, since the rock in situ is limestone, and the Potsdam sandstone of which they consisted does not occur within two miles of the place…

10. In a recent study of the Crystal River Mounds, Pluckhahn et el. (2010:177) remark that one of the radiocarbon dates from material associated with Stelae 1 "has a calibrated range extending from A.D. 350 to 890." Significantly, they further comment that following Ripley P. Bullen's excavations at this site a third stelae "was discovered later and remains poorly understood." Although the third stelae is not further described in their article, it appears that all three examples were fashioned from locally available "limestone slabs that eroded up from the surface of the limestone stratum that underlies the site" (Milanich 1999:23). The cultural relationship (if any) between the Crystal River stelae (and, indeed, similar standing stones in the Upland South) to megaliths (cf. Holmes 1885) and stelae (cf. Adams 1977:145; Sanders 1977; Sharer and Traxler 2006) in Mesoamerica remains a matter of conjecture.

11. It goes without saying that promising leads for locating additional Upland South megaliths and other examples of stone architecture are where one finds them. The following comments were observed while searching for information on the Internet and appear herein as a matter of record:

> Stone Circle near Chimney Rock N.C. U.S.A.
> Near Chimney Rock in North Carolina I was able to visit a stone circle here in the United States that is reported to be several hundred years old. I did not have a camera with me when I was there but the circle there is made up of 36 good sized stones and it is supposed to be rather ancient. It was written about in the mid 1700's so we know it is much older than that. The Native Americans who were in the area at that time said fierce yellow haired men came from the north and erected the circle of stones many years before and this was the story being told in 1730. It sounds as if Vikings or something of that type may have visited western North Carolina much before 1730. Nearby the stone circle are several graves covered with stones (Web site titled "Stone Circle" accessible at: <http://hubpages.com/hub/Stone_Cicle>; accessed October 9, 2010).

Although it is difficult to ascribe any credibility to hyper-diffusionist claims of Viking settlement in southern Appalachia, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that stone circles and mounds were constructed in the mountains of North Carolina. The small settlement of Chimney Rock (and its namesake Chimney Rock State Park) is located in Rutherford County, (western) North Carolina.

Another example of a possible – but certainly not confirmed – southeastern megalith was reported in a short article titled "The Legend of Chicameca's Head" by Herbert Sales Halbert published in the May 1886 issue of the The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal. We have found no later descriptions of this piece and it remains open to question if this stone was erected by human hands or simply a natural outcrop which was subsequently anthropomorphized. Louisville, the county seat of Winston County, is located in the east-central portion of the state of Mississippi. Although cited by several later works (e.g., Brescia 1985:12-13, erroneously attributed therein to John R. Swanton), Halbert's brief comments appear to be both the earliest and only report of this stone. This seems like the type of local landmark that might be further mentioned in a county history. As recorded by Halbert (1886):

> To the Editor American Antiquarian:
>
> About six miles south west of Louisville, Mississippi, upon the crest of a high hill in the midst of a primeval forest, stands an upright stone, about three feet high, cropping out of the earth, which bears a rude resemblance to a gigantic human bust—head, neck, and shoulders. This stone had early attracted the attention of the Choctaws, who called it "Chicameca's Head," and the following legend was related by them in regard to it:
>
> At some period in the far distant past, the Choctaws lived in a western country, where they were tributary to a powerful people called the Chicamecas. From some cause, they resolved to leave this country and seek a new home toward the rising sun. After crossing the Mississippi, they heard, to their dismay, that a large army of Chicamecas, under their chief Chicameca, was in hot pursuit, resolved to force them to return to the land of bondage.
>
> Chicameca finally overtook the fugitives, and gave them the alternative of obedience to his demands, or else utter extermination. The Choctaws chose the latter, and prepared to fight to the last. Chicameca then urged his warriors to the onset. He had just given the loud war-whoop, when suddenly the earth opened be- [page 165] neath his feet, and the mighty chief Chicameca sunk out of sight in the yawning chasm. His army saw the sight and fled in wild dismay, leaving the fugitive Choctaws to pursue their way in peace.
>
> The beating rains of many centuries falling upon that hill at last unearthed or unveiled the petrified bust of the renowned chief Chicameca, with his stern face lowering towards the south; and there, if not destroyed by vandalism, the stone image of the prehistoric warrior will remain for ages to come.
>
> Such is the legend of "Chicameca's Head," as was related to the writer some years ago by W. T. Lewis, Esq., of Winston County, who in early life heard it from the lips of an aged Choctaw.
>
> H. S. Halbert
> Philadelphia, Mississippi

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