

**ADDENDUM TO THE SECTION IN THE BEAR GRASS
ON THE FINCASTLE TO CUMBERLAND GAP TURNPIKE**

DISCOVERY OF AN EXISTING WAY STATION

(see section starting on page 30)

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Since The Bear Grass was written the two then known way stations from the Fincastle-to-Cumberland Gap-Turnpike are no longer there. The Carter House in Rye Cove has been dismantled and reconstructed in Natural Tunnel State Park, and the one south of Rose Hill and pictured on page 34 has rotted to the ground. Even the chimney of the way station of William Ewing at milepost 30 pictured on page 34 has been destroyed.

Early this fall Mr. Eunice Laster, a long time resident of upper Wallen's Creek, told me that there was an existing way station from the Fincastle to Cumberland Gap Turnpike still standing in Stickleyville. Going west on US 421 & 58 one turns left on State 612 (the Middle Fork of Wallen's Creek Rd.), and immediately turns left again on the old loop of the highway, now Sage Mt. Rd. Go past the fire hall and over Wallen's Creek, and the structure stands at the end of the blind loop on the left.

The architecture of the house is strikingly similar to the old Rose Hill way station, especially the roof and bannister of the upper front porch. They seem to have been made from the same design.

This road is the Great Warrior's Path (Athawominee), and later the Great Kentucky Road. In 1834 Claudius Crozet, Virginia's famous State Engineer, got the General Assembly to fund an improved toll turnpike to run from Fincastle Virginia, where it connected to the Valley Turnpike, to Cumberland Gap. This road was completed in 1841, and was known officially as the Fincastle to Cumberland Gap Turnpike.

However, prior to this version of the road, it was a postal road known as "The Cumberland Road". The Commonwealth of Virginia had this road surveyed and mapped in 1833, probably in preparation for the Turnpike. This map still exists at the Library of Virginia.

This map clearly shows the way station in question, and shows it as having been called "Col. Allen's" at milepost 50 (the numbering of mile posts began where the turnpike entered Virginia just to the east of Cumberland Gap).

This individual was born in Augusta County, Virginia, which at the time included everything west of Staunton, including Kentucky. He moved down Powell River to Claibourne Co., Tennessee, but returned to Lee Co., Virginia. He married Hanna Hanger, and they bought land on Wallen's Creek from John and Susannah Eller. The gap in Powell Mountain through which US 421 & 58 pass is named Eller's Gap. Starting in 1824 Allen served two terms in the House of Delegates representing Lee County. The same year as the map of the Cumberland Road was published, he obtained a license from the Lee Court to operate "a house of private entertainment". This suggests that Allen's Way Station was not only a horse-changing depot, but also an inn. It would seem likely that these related events were part of the improvement program leading to the Fincastle to Cumberland Gap Turnpike. Lesser way stations, like Carter's in Rye Cove, were only horse changing depots.

In 1834 Allen was elected High Sheriff of Lee County, and he died in 1840. Allen's way station passed to the Col's. son, John Hanger Allen, in 1834, probably in anticipation of the Col.'s death.

No documentation about the Col.'s military commission or record has been found. Given the dates, the War of 1812 seems most likely.

See Photographs below.





Log house on the Fincastle Turnpike near Rose Hill.



