

A Hunter's Headstone

by Eric A. Bye

NMLRA member Tom Cooley brought us these photos of the headstone of David Huston (1814-1884) in Talbott Cemetery near Bono, Indiana.

Late in life Mr. Huston was profiled as follows:

DAVID HUSTON is by birth a Kentuckian, born in Nelson County January 21st, 1814... Acquiring but a limited education in his youth, David Huston selected farming as his life's vocation, and has steadily followed that with unflagging interest. He cared for his parents until their respective deaths, and never marrying, is regarded in high esteem as a jolly old bachelor and an upright citizen. In politics he is an enthusiastic supporter of Republican principles, and contributes from his abundant resources in the support of the best interests of the country. (*History of Lawrence, Orange, and Washington Counties, Indiana*. Chicago: Goodspeed Bros., 1884, p.339)



photos by Tom Cooley

In the same year Mr. Huston's obituary appeared:

"Died - at his home in Bono on Dec. 4, David Huston, after an illness extending over ten years, aged 72 years. Mr. Huston was one of the oldest citizens of Lawrence County, and his loss will be sincerely mourned by the entire community." (*The Lawrence Mail*, Dec. 11, 1884)

None of the foregoing explains the impressive headstone in the photos. However, surviving correspondence among some of Mr. Huston's brothers mentions the price of raccoon skins and hunting deer and wolves. We may reasonably conclude from the sculpted motifs on the headstone that David Huston was an avid and accomplished outdoorsman, hunter, fisherman, and maybe even a target shooter - probably a kindred spirit to many of us - and that he wanted to be remembered for these interests. Mr. Huston's tombstone is a fine example of the regional style carved in the shape of tree trunks. Unfortunately, little is known about the artists who sculpted them.

(Sincere thanks to Joyce Shepherd, Library Director, Lawrence County Museum of History & Edward L. Hutton Research Library, Bedford, Indiana, for help in tracking down this elusive information) **MB**