

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Denton Monument

AND/OR COMMON

The Old Tombstone (Preferred)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER In Old Tombstone Cemetery. 1.2 miles N of City of Roanoke; E side of State Route 115; E of intersection of state routes 1883 and 115, NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Roanoke

VICINITY OF

Sixth (M. Caldwell Butler)

STATE

Virginia

CODE

51

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY

Roanoke

CODE

161

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

__DISTRICT

__PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

__AGRICULTURE

__MUSEUM

__BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

__UNOCCUPIED

__COMMERCIAL

__PARK

__STRUCTURE

__BOTH

__WORK IN PROGRESS

__EDUCATIONAL

__PRIVATE RESIDENCE

__SITE

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

ACCESSIBLE

__ENTERTAINMENT

__RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

__IN PROCESS

__YES RESTRICTED

__GOVERNMENT

__SCIENTIFIC

__BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

__INDUSTRIAL

__TRANSPORTATION

__NO

__MILITARY

OTHER Monument

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Tombstone Cemetery c/o Mr. W. H. Engle

STREET & NUMBER

3208 Round Hill Avenue, NW

CITY, TOWN

Roanoke

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia

24012

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Roanoke County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Salem

STATE

Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE

1977

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, 221 Governor Street

CITY, TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia

23229

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Situated on a ridge northeast of the city of Roanoke, the Denton Monument is surrounded by the modern Tombstone Cemetery, so-called after the monument's popular name, the Old Tombstone.

A monolithic freestone carving marking the grave of nine-year-old Robert Denton, it is four feet long, two feet six inches wide, and, at its thickest, one foot six inches deep. It takes the form of a rectangular slab with clipped corners, upon which rests a ridged hexagonal coffin which is open from its widest point up, exposing the head and torso of a child. There was once a removable lid which covered the corpse, but it has been stolen. The upper and lateral surfaces of the coffin and the slab are inscribed in German, English, and Latin. As one faces the coffin from the feet, the top right panel contains the beginning of "A Family Register" of Benjamin Denton (b. 1769) and his wife Peggy Anderson (b. 1774), who were married in 1793. The listing is carried over onto the right side panel of the coffin and the adjacent top surface of the slab and records the birth dates of the four Denton children born by the time of Robert's death in 1805. The left top and side surfaces of the coffin are inscribed with a poem in English relating to death, resurrection, and family remembrance; the same poem is repeated in German on the top of the slab and in Latin on the long left vertical side. At the foot of the slab on its vertical surface is carved a moon and three stars; the flanking oblique panels are embellished with baskets of German-style tulips. The head of the slab is decorated with Germanic hearts on the oblique panels; these flank a central panel embellished with the rising sun of resurrection and, in the upper corners, with the artist's signature—"Laurence Krone Ston Mason."

The depredations of vandals have unfortunately prompted the complete enclosure of the monument in a sheet-metal-roofed, chain-link cage, making it difficult to see the stone and virtually impossible to photograph it.

DU

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary coincides with the perimeter of the concrete base on which the fence-enclosed monument sits -- all measuring approximately 15' x 15'.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) funerary art
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1805 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Laurence Krone, 'Stone Mason'

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Denton Monument, popularly known as the Old Tombstone, is an important product of the traditions of funerary art which flourished in western Virginia in the early nineteenth century. It is a masterwork of Laurence Krone, one of the most skilled Virginia German carvers and the only one known by name. Erected sometime after 1805 to commemorate the death of nine-year-old Robert Denton, the monolithic monument combines decorative elements of the German folk art tradition with sentimental poems in German, Latin, and English. Its representation of the corpse in its coffin is similar to some found in New England. Its form is unique in Virginia yet vividly emblematic of the vitality and eclecticism of folk art and life in early western Virginia.

Laurence Krone (d. 1836) apparently came to America from central Europe in the late eighteenth century, reaching Virginia around 1800. He settled near Wytheville and is responsible for most of the best work in the cemetery at St. John's Lutheran Church, Wytheville (which contains his other masterpiece, the Rev. George Flohr tomb of 1826); the McGavock family graveyard at Fort Chiswell, Wythe County; and several others. He is also known to have carved the gates for the Cloyd family burying ground at Back Creek Farm, Pulaski County.

The Denton Monument, which legend attributes to Krone's gratitude for care received during an illness, is his only signed work, and it is in many ways characteristic of his art. It displays decorative motifs popular among German artists--the hearts, the tulips, the rising sun--and it is generously provided with products of the great lettering ability for which Krone is known and particularly of his singular willingness to carve German Gothic script and to use the German language in general. Other German and British carvers had used coffin representations before Krone, but he seems to have been particularly fond of using them for his larger works. The representation of an open coffin displaying a corpse (indeed of any human likeness) is unique in Virginia, so far as is known, but it was not unusual in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century New England. The use of this specific motif in common with the northern states is probably a coincidence, but Krone, drawing upon the resources of ethnically mixed western Virginia for his symbols and decorative details, was expressing with them, as with his trilingual poetry and with the whole notion of a family monument, a new, national tendency to sentimentalize death, childhood, and the family in general. The poem urges the "sweet babe" to "sleep on" secure in the memories of the family whose membership is carefully recorded on the monument, until the archangel calls him to the "blest abode" of God. The Denton Monument thus reflects a particular moment of cultural flux when the traditional life of several western Virginia ethnic groups was beginning to meld into a national culture, a process which can be traced in its later developments in other artifacts from the area.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Wust, Klaus. Folk Art In Stone. Edinburg, Va., 1970.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre (approx. 225 sq. ft.)

UTM REFERENCES

A	17	593720	4132900	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The boundaries comprise a 15' square coinciding with the perimeter of the concrete base on which the monument sits.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE July 1977

STREET & NUMBER 221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE (804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN Richmond

STATE Virginia 23219

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE JUL 19 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

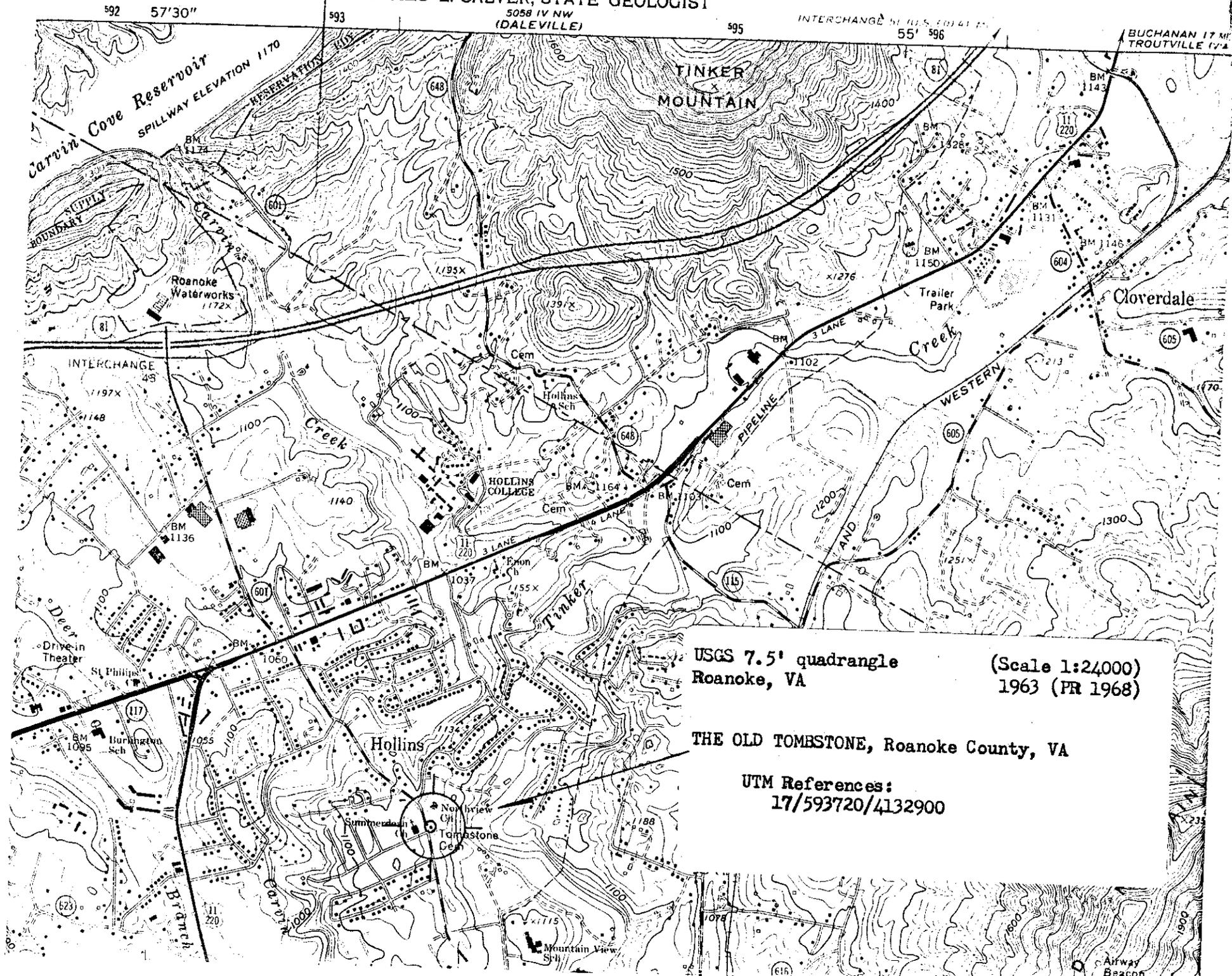
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES
JAMES L. CALVER, STATE GEOLOGIST
5058 IV NW
(DALEVILLE)



USGS 7.5' quadrangle
Roanoke, VA
(Scale 1:24,000)
1963 (PR 1968)

THE OLD TOMBSTONE, Roanoke County, VA

UTM References:
17/593720/4132900