

There are two issues regarding this tombstone. One involves why the stone was buried so that only its topmost tip remained above ground. The other issue centers on the identity of Jane S. Davies and her relationship to the Howells, the Walls, the Turners, or the Lacys.

Dorothy Scott Johnson in her book **CEMETERIES OF MADISON COUNTY, ALABAMA**, Volume 1, states that she was told that a tornado had hit the cemetery on December 19 of 1967. She was further advised that the tornado had "... destroyed many of the stones, including some box tombs." Mrs. Johnson postulated that perhaps the tornado had driven the tombstone of Jane Davies deep into the ground, since it was found to be buried when she visited the cemetery in the late 1960s.

While tornadoes indeed do many very strange things, it would be truly miraculous for one to drive such a tombstone vertically into the ground to such a depth, without breaking or cracking it. Furthermore, tornado forces normally lift items **upward**. They do not generally produce downward forces on objects. Even if the tornado toppled a tree onto the stone, the expected result would be that the stone would simply be broken, and perhaps pieces of it would be blown away. That is definitely not the case here. The tombstone is precisely vertical, not leaning in any direction, and it had obviously not settled into a hole from any burrowing animals, as the earth was firmly packed around it and underneath it. It is not even credible that the stone simply settled into the grave when the coffin collapsed years after the burial, as it would then definitely have had a pronounced lean. The soil around the stone is firm, and there is absolutely no perceived lean in any direction. Additionally, there is no indication whatsoever of a grave depression to associate with a coffin collapse.

Moreover, the tombstone was not buried by a flood, as the terrain is on a slightly sloped high point in the area, and there were no indications of any flooding. For example, the box tomb for Prudence Howell that is within about 3 or 4 feet of the buried tombstone would be much more likely to show flood effects (debris entrapments) than a simple vertical stone, but there are no such indications. Still more unusual is the fact that the box tomb of Prudence Howell is positioned partially over the grave of Jane Davies, if Jane is in fact buried behind her headstone, to the west. That is doubly strange, since Jane's death date is 1848, whereas Prudence's death date is 1840. These dates would require that Jane's legs and feet were emplaced underneath Prudence's crypt, 8 years after Prudence was buried.