

Geology of Calico Rock

Scientists believe a huge sea once covered this area. When the sea receded it left behind the **White River**. Since ancient times, the river has cut through layers of sandstone and limestone to create the bluffs.



Native Americans called the river **River Unica** and the French named it **La Rivera Blanche** because they had never seen such a pristine body of water.

On the bluffs, the **red rust iron** from sandstone and **black manganese** stains from limestone make up the calico coloring.

French explorers and fur traders named this place **calico roche** or **Calico Rock**. The stains reminded them of the rich calico cloth popular in the day.

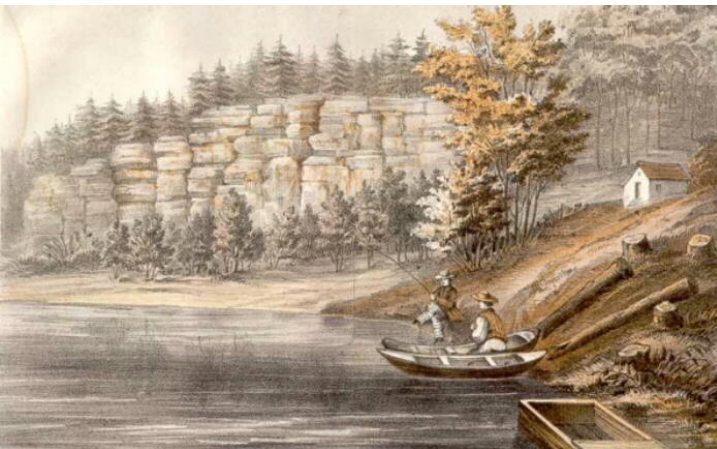
Calico Rock became an important trading post because the bluffs split at **Calico Creek** and the hills rise gently allowed better transportation across country.

Pioneer Settlers

Calico Rock became a territory of the United States in the **Louisiana Purchase** in 1803. The area was sparsely populated until after the **War of 1812**.

John Lafferty was the first documented settler in Izard County in 1802. The place is called Lafferty Creek.

The Wolf House was built on the White River in 1809 at Norfolk. It was Izard County's first county seat in 1825.



Jehoida Jeffery was given land near Calico Rock for his service in the War of 1812. In 1819, he brought the **first slaves** to the county.

On January 16, 1819, explorer **Henry Rowe Schoolcraft** canoed past this spot on a mining expedition. In his journal he wrote:

“On turning a bend in the river, suddenly the rock appears before you...It is a lofty smooth wall of stratified lime-stone rock, presenting a diversity of colour in squares, stripes, spots, or angles, all confusedly mixed...and hence its name...”

No Law or Order

A. C. Jeffery wrote “After the War of 1812 the river valley was ‘overrun by immigrants **without restriction of law or the fear of God**. These included hunters, stock raisers, horse thieves, murderers and refugees from prisons.’



Every territory had their own currency and **counterfeiting** was prevalent.



Bear, buffalo, and elk were plentiful around Calico Rock. **Hunting and trapping** were a way of life. Trading pelts and furs was an industry by 1817.

The territory began growing. Robert Livingston built the first **water grist mill** at nearby Athens in 1820. The territorial legislature created IZARD County in 1825. Contact with the outside world was improving, too. Asa McFelix began operating a **keelboat** to New Orleans in 1826. It took six months round trip.

Settling Calico Rock Timeline

- 1541 Legend holds Hernando Desoto explored area**
- 1682 France owned Arkansas**
- 1762 Spain owned Arkansas**
- 1800 France again owned Arkansas**
- 1802 John Lafferty first settler in IZARD County**
- 1803 Louisiana Purchase**
- 1816 Counterfeiting of territory currency common**
- 1817 Bear, buffalo and elk plentiful and trapping rampant**
Treaty established Cherokee Nation South of river
- 1819 Henry Schoolcraft expedition down White River**
- 1820 Robert Livingston opens first mill at Athens**
- 1825 IZARD County established**
- 1826 Asa McFelix keelboat to New Orleans**
- 1836 Arkansas becomes the 25th state**