

# WANDERLUST IN THE WEST: DANIEL BOONE AND THE ENIGMATIC LEGEND OF AMERICAN MYTHOLOGY

Daniel Firth Griffith

“That the West should un-falteringly follow the East in fashions and ideals would be as false and fatal as that America should obey the standards of Europe. Let the West, daring and unprejudiced, discover its own ideals and follow them. The American standard in literature and philosophy has long been fixed by the remote East. Something wild and free, something robust and full will come out of the West and be recognized in the final American type. Under the shadow of those great mountains a distinct personality shall arise, it shall adopt other fashions, create new ideals, and generations shall justify them.”

– Adell M. Parker  
*With Due Formality*, 1894

## Introduction

On July 14, 2015, an interplanetary spacecraft conducted its closest flyby reconnaissance of the dwarf planet in the Kuiper belt, *Pluto*. Launched to explore mankind’s next frontier, this spacecraft was given the name: *New Horizons*. Included in NASA’s *New Frontiers* project, its mission was simple: to chart and examine the outer edge of our solar system. Whether in this world or that, mankind’s insatiable desire to reconnoiter new frontiers is palpable. It is this

transparent yearning that drives us to the edge of every world we inhabit. It is in this simple yet enigmatic urge to grasp the unknown that reveals how wanderlust behaves. Defined as the desire to explore beyond the safe harbors of one’s own world, it drives man to forever discover what waits beyond the next bluff, cliff, or ridge, leaving him forever curious and eternally wanting.<sup>1</sup> It characterizes the velocity of man, as it is girded by inquisitive force and natural direction. As long as there exists an observable universe, man will forever be driven as its chief explorer. Such a velocity permeated the life and character of the eighteenth century woodsman, Daniel Boone.

Like a Homeric character, the life of Boone has been preserved by oral tradition and is ridden with much folklore and myth.<sup>2</sup> Although Daniel attempted to record his own story, his autobiography was twice written and twice lost, as his words acted merely as starter agents to many an Indian fire. His very name is conspicuous in the annals of history and his legend is known throughout the world, yet few are acquainted with the man and his true character. Unfortunately, centuries of myth and mist cloud the history of this woodsman. Many presume that Boone was a rugged and coarse

---

*Daniel Firth Griffith of Medina, Ohio, is a 2017 graduate of the Ashbrook Scholar Program having majored in History and Computer Science.*

---

<sup>1</sup> The best definition of wanderlust I found was in my Grandfather’s Memoirs. It is simple yet complete: “Wanderlust,” he wrote, was the “desire to explore beyond the safe harbors of one’s own world.”

<sup>2</sup> Faragher, John Mack. *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1992. 13.

backwoodsman, as *rough* as the wilderness he chased, as *savage* as the Indians he fought, and as *tenacious* as the bears he slayed. Contrary to this popular belief, however, he was not the most “rippin'-est, roarin'-est, fightin'-est man the frontier ever knew,” to quote the 1960s television series, *Daniel Boone*. You can also disregard the coonskin hat—he never wore one. The images of Hollywood, presenting him as a gleeful, illiterate hunter of the backcountry wearing nothing but buck and coonskin clothes, are exactly that: images of Hollywood. Boone is most often presented in the muddy mixture of history, legend, and media hysteria as if that picture were real. But such are the powers of man’s imagination and modern communications.

Although a household name, Boone’s relationship with his own historical period is often blurred within the popular mind. Geographically, few today know which English colony he called home. Today, the small frontier town of his youth is the fifth largest in the entire State, boasting some 87,000 residents. In tourist magazines it is referred to as “The Pretzel City,” leaving one simple sentence in reference to its founder, Daniel’s grandfather. Chronologically, even fewer today can place him alongside his contemporaries with any accuracy. Did he fight alongside George Washington in Braddock’s campaign or die defending The Alamo? Your curiosity is not alone, for Daniel himself read many accounts of his own death in local newspapers.

We know the *name* but do we know the *man*? Was he the first to settle the rugged wilderness of Kentucky? Was he the hero of the early American frontier? Was he civilization’s pathfinder into the primordial west? Was he an Indian killer? Patriot? American explorer? In her 1985 National Geographic history titled *Daniel Boone: First Hero of the Frontier*, Elizabeth Moize wrote, “Daniel Boone stands as the prototype frontiersman—a strong, silent figure

moving swiftly through virgin timber, sighting a deer, felling it with one shot of his flintlock.”<sup>3</sup> It is his intimate and virgin romance with the land of the setting sun—the untouched and pure west—that ignites our dreams and engulfs our folklore. Unequivocally, Boone is the uncontested legend of the American West.

The majority of the historical information we have of this woodsman is found in manuscripts, early American newspapers, and letters, although over thirty “biographical” volumes have been published on Boone since the late 1780s. These latter works offered histories of their own, each either consciously or unconsciously shaping the woodsman’s image according to their own predilections, partialities and predispositions. Therefore, the works produced by Daniel’s hunting companions: Peter Houston, Richard Henderson, and Felix Walker, and those produced by Daniel’s immediate contacts and family: Nathan Boone, Lyman C. Draper, and John Filson, are to be considered as primary sources together with a wide array of newspaper articles, letters, and county documents. Subsequent biographies are to be treated as extremely useful but entirely secondary.

While the literary breadth of Daniel Boone is prodigious, its depth is somewhat lacking. The obvious deficit of substantial scholarship could be, perhaps, because Daniel was a private man. Perhaps it is because his autobiography was “twice written and twice lost.”<sup>4</sup> Maybe his biographers found more wealth and animation in folklore than in fact. However, as the twentieth century statesman Winston S. Churchill wrote, “The chronicler of ill-recorded times has none the less to tell his tale. If facts are

---

<sup>3</sup> Moize, Elizabeth A. *Daniel Boone, First Hero of the Frontier*. 1895. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Bakeless, John. *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1939. xv.

lacking, rumor must serve.”<sup>5</sup> In his 1962 Western, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, director John Ford asserted a similar maxim. Speaking as the editor of the newspaper, Ford’s character Maxwell Scott asserted that, in the West, “when the legend becomes fact, print the legend.”

The dense atmosphere of the American frontier was incredibly complex, however. Moreover, it was plagued with paradox. A pioneer and hunter, Daniel Boone epitomized the model of frontier virility and manhood. Although commonly considered the archetypical American frontiersman, a standard-bearer of the American man, Boone’s personal understanding of the American frontier and its relation to an evolving American regime is anything but clear. Daniel’s frontier was the divergent region at the edge of the Anglo-American line of settlement, later known as the American West, although his purpose at the fringe of civilization reveals both a personal and national paradox. Michael Lofaro writes in his biography, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*, “Boone...typifies the inner conflict between civilization and the wilderness.”<sup>6</sup>

But how is this conflict characterized? As one of the pioneers of civilization’s push westwards, Daniel was also the free, independent, and natural man who desired the “simplicity and rugged vitality of the woods beyond all else,” writes Lofaro. The more apt his exploration and widespread his reputation, the more available the West became to the modern man. By chasing the sunset to avoid the glare of its rising, Daniel not only paved a physical path but a philosophical map for others to follow. Thus his destiny appears to be, somehow, self-defeating, for irony and uncertainty plagued his

life and permeated his happiness on the frontier.

Past the conflicting convictions that he confronted, Daniel’s character was also complex and composite. Although he was no hermit, Daniel enjoyed the purity of nature and the simplicity of solitude; although not a lover of civilization, Daniel fought in Braddock’s 1755 campaign during the French and Indian War.<sup>7</sup> He also led many men into battle as a Colonel in the United States Militia and he held many civil appointments such as Sheriff and County Lieutenant. Daniel served in the Colony of Transylvania’s legislature and then served three terms in the Virginia General Assembly—serving beside Thomas Jefferson in 1781—and established the town of Boonesborough in modern day Kentucky. For Daniel, the frontier was “simultaneously a challenge and an inspiration, something to subdue and improve and to preserve and enjoy.”<sup>8</sup> Lofaro continued,

As someone who bridged and understood both native and pioneer cultures, Boone sought to avoid bloodshed, to negotiate solutions to conflicts, and literally to hold on to a shrinking geographical and cultural middle ground as the violence of native-settler conflict and of the Revolutionary War in the West escalated around him in Kentucky.<sup>9</sup>

Early twentieth century historian Henry Nash Smith asked in his book, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, “Which was the real Boone—the standard-bearer of civilization and refinement, or the child of nature who fled into the

---

<sup>5</sup> Churchill, Winston. *Marlborough: His Life and Times*, Book One. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993. 310.

<sup>6</sup> Lofaro, Michael A. *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003. preface.

---

<sup>7</sup> Boone, Nathan. *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. Neal O. Hammon, ed. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999. 13-14.

<sup>8</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. Preface.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, Preface.

wilderness before the advance of settlement?”<sup>10</sup> Was Daniel Boone an *empire builder* or a *philosopher of primitivism*? Did a love of—and dedication for—civilization or the untouched and sublime crags of the wilderness decide his destiny? *That is the fundamental question.*

Reverend Francis Lewis Hawks prefaced his 1856 history, *Life of Daniel Boone*, writing, “the panorama of [Daniel Boone’s] life, is a picture, on which admiring millions will yet gaze with infinite delight.”<sup>11</sup> It is my *purpose* to step beyond the realm of subjective history, seeking to understand Daniel’s objective and true picture: to find him in *his* woods, with *his* own gun, and with *his* own mind. It is my *goal* to compose both a vibrant portrait of this woodsman and a palpable periphery of the early American West, building the easel of western history first and sculpting a three-dimensional image of our woodsman second. The proceeding chapters will progress through an analysis of Daniel’s narrative, recurrently navigating from his youth to his adulthood to highlight his woods, his gun, and his mind. By first examining historiography’s frontier, we will unveil the mountain pass; by exploring Daniel’s early life and character we will begin to understand the cardinal points of his compass; by dissecting Daniel’s thoughts of—and actions within—nature, we will begin to understand Daniel’s woods; by surveying the true history of the American Native, we will begin to appreciate the peripheral lives of the West; and by examining Daniel’s actions alongside the Native, we will uncover the true velocity of Daniel Boone’s Wanderlust.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Historiography’s *Frontier*

#### *America’s Mythological Enigmas*

In his work, *Regeneration Through Violence*, modern cultural critic and historian Richard Slotkin equated the character of a nation to the “intelligible mask” of its mythological “enigmas.”<sup>12</sup> Within such a mask, Slotkin claimed, we can discern the complex worldview of our ancestors and the historical plane on which such views operated. It is the guise through which past mythologies and legends are transmitted and understood. The imperfect “intelligibility” of such a pretense has intrinsic boundaries, however. The national mythology of the early American frontier exemplifies this natural limit, as the “myth of the frontier”—the “conception of America as a wide-open land of unlimited opportunity for the strong, ambitious, self-reliant individual to thrust his way to the top”—is blind, incomplete, and problematic at best.<sup>13</sup> Against this dubious narrative, the American West’s historiography pioneered its way through an implacable yet magnificent frontier. Simply, to gain a true understanding of the legend of Daniel Boone in American mythology, we must first understand “the *precise* nature of [this mythology’s] constantly changing relationship to the wilderness” and debunk American historiography’s adaptive and challenging “frontier psychology.”<sup>14</sup>

The history of the American frontier has been carried by literature and lyric; by folklore and fiction. American writers “have attempted the Homeric task of providing, through epic poetry or epic fiction, a starting point for a new, uniquely American myth-

---

<sup>10</sup> Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as a Symbol and Myth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950. 55.

<sup>11</sup> Hawks, Francis Lewis. *Life of Daniel Boone*. Dayton: Ells, Marquis & Company, 1856. 6.

<sup>12</sup> Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

ology,” writes Slotkin.<sup>15</sup> Before the emergence of the fundamental Western histories of the late nineteenth century two strains of frontier historiography dominated: the first emerged from the accounts and journals of explorers and pioneers and the second from popular images of epic wild west literature.

### ***The Analytical, Romantic, and Howling West***

During the late Colonial and Republic periods, explorers such as Meriwether Lewis, Zebulon Pike, William Clark, and Stephen H. Long chronicled their journeys west with furnishings of flora and fauna, of terrains and native peoples. If one were to crack open the analytical *Journal of Lewis and Clark* or *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike to Headwaters of the Mississippi River* they would find straightforward descriptions that were almost scientific in nature. Properly titled as journals or accounts, these historical narratives focused on the American West as a perilous but picturesque land; a living and breathing frontier. Left out of such organic memoirs were the imaginative historical reshapings of their experiences. They were not romantic; they were real.

Literary images of romance beyond the line of Anglo-American settlement became embedded in western history and literature around the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Although authors such as Washington Irving took “copious factual notes” of the West and read widely the journals of western explorers, he fashioned his notes by “separating the uncivilized West from the cultured East.”<sup>16</sup> Irving’s west was romantic and his wilderness made “explicit the social distinctions between his unpolished fron-

tiersmen and their sophisticated eastern companions.”<sup>17</sup>

James Fenimore Cooper also contributed much to this epoch of American “history.” Cooper later admitted that many of his frontier characters were derived from the many legends of Daniel Boone. In his books—*Pathfinder*, *The Pioneers*, *The Deerslayer*, *Prairie*, and *The Last of the Mohicans*—Cooper used the figures of Leatherstocking, Natty Bumppo, and Trapper as the “personification of strength, courage,” and “responsibility” that Daniel Boone “enduringly embodie[d]” in American history.<sup>18</sup> Although always concerned with the rugged tales of his frontier hero, Natty Bumppo (*The Deerslayer*), “Cooper loved Natty and his wilderness but seemed afraid that he would belch at dinner.”<sup>19</sup> Cooper, like his fellow authors, was in love with the primitive and virgin wilderness, its romance and lure, but was weary of the ruggedness and the rudeness of its inhabitants.

Taken as historical accounts, these works were little better than illustrations of eastern ethnocentrism masked in a frontier facade. Moreover, they were written by outsiders, a west beheld by the spectacle of the east. Although such *tableaux* exhibit no single, definite focus, they all share one notable characteristic:

An ambivalence that *cherished* the open landscape and freedom of the West on the one hand but *hesitated* to embrace the frontier characters and sociocultural life on the other.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>16</sup> Etulain, Richard W. “Introduction: The Rise of Western Historiography,” in *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*. ed., Richard W. Etulain. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>18</sup> Morgan, Robert. *Boone: A Biography*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2007. Niles’ Register, X, 361 (June 15, 1816). 447; Kolodny, Annette. *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Etulain. *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 3.

It was a *west* to behold on museum walls; a *west* to spark romantic imagination on civilization's wooded periphery. It was a *west* forbidden to all except the ferocious hero, forever torn by the sun's rising and setting. Most importantly, however, it was not *the* American West, although beautifully comparable to the fictional lands of Lilliput or Valhalla.

Timothy Flint's 1833 *Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone* exemplifies this romantically quixotic depiction. Writing of Boone's travels in the Kentucky wilderness, Flint asserted,

No feeling, but a devotion to their favorite pursuits and modes of life, stronger than the fear of abandonment, in the interminable and pathless woods, to all forms of misery and death, could ever have enabled them to persist in braving the danger and distress that stared them in the face at every advancing step.<sup>21</sup>

Flint's wilderness was the grand opening stage in the providential play of civilization and Boone's role was its triumphant leader. Possessing "little historical interest," Flint's work displayed his idealistic western-ism.<sup>22</sup> In his introduction to Flint's biography, James K. Folsom concluded that, to Flint, "life in the West becomes more desirable as conditions in the West itself approach conditions in the East." Similarly, in his 1845 biography, *Daniel Boone—The First Hunter of Kentucky*, William Gilmore Simms presented Boone as a "knight errant," driven by aristocratic heroism and virtue and not afraid to challenge the primitive Indian in a duel of the mind or the bout.<sup>23</sup> Simply, the romantically progressive

early western histories presented Boone as the Columbus of the wilderness, determined to chart the unchartable and pacify the recalcitrant barbarian. He was civilization's omnipotent pathfinder, leading God's holy mission in the New World.

Such Wild West histories emerged long before the nineteenth century. As early as the seventeenth century, the Puritans of New England wrote of their wooded periphery as a devilish wasteland, howling and filled with barbarous Indians. They understood their voyage to the New World as spiritual in nature and the typography therein as the same. Like the mythical analogue of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, where the "archetypal Christian" departs on a heroic quest not as the "captain of conquering soldiers" but as a figure seeking a repose from a sinful humanity, the Puritan's of New England understood the Native as "emblems of temptation" and their wilderness as its source.<sup>24</sup> In the New World, the pristine Puritan culture was pitted against one antithetical to their own. They used this to their advantage. Richard Slotkin wrote that the New England Puritans "emphasized their Englishness by setting their civilization against Indian Barbarism."<sup>25</sup> They were concerned with both the physical and psychological ecology of the New World. Slotkin concluded,

The basic factors in the physical and psychological situation of the colonists were the wildness of the land, its blending of unmitigated harshness and tremendous potential fertility;

<sup>21</sup> Flint, Timothy, *Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone*, ed. James K. Folsom. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967. 46.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> William Gilmore Simms, "Daniel Boone—The First Hunter of Kentucky," in his *Views and*

*Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction*, ed. C. Hugh Holman (1845; reprint, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1963), pp. 149-51.

<sup>24</sup> Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. 39.

<sup>25</sup> Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. 21.

the absence of strong European cultures on the borders; and the eternal presence of the native people of the woods, dark of skin and seemingly dark of mind, mysterious, bloody, cruel, “devil-worshipping.”<sup>26</sup>

In his 1662 address, *God’s Controversy with New England*, seventeenth century Puritan Minister Michael Wigglesworth described the American West as “a waste and howling wilderness, where none inhabited but hellish fiends, and brutish men that devils worshiped.”<sup>27</sup> In this devils den, Wigglesworth equated the rugged wilderness of the frontier with that of a “fiend,” unfit for human society and unwelcome in human civilization. Wigglesworth’s depiction transformed the depths of the Mississippi and the heights of the Alleghenies into an impenetrable wall, blocking the savagery of the West from the purified east.

Such early American frontier ideology was chronicled in dramatized accounts of hunter heroes and innocent maidens escaping from their barbarian captives, overcoming a remote wilderness infested with savages. Presented as histories, these *captivity narratives* praised the triumphant hero for their chastity, Christianity, and courage among their captives. In his introduction to *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*, Richard W. Etulain summarized the core of these narratives:

Since the West was less advanced than the East, it needed civilizing agents, and progress dictated that less advanced people and ideologies must give way to higher laws of progress and civilization. The West was truly wild—in need of giant

doses of society and culture, which the East alone could provide.<sup>28</sup>

This early ideology illustrated the American West as a territory that needed saving—a saving possible only through “an infusion of ministers and teachers,” of warriors and heroes.<sup>29</sup> Slotkin claimed this mythology “embodied the dark side of the Puritan attitude toward the natural world in general and toward the American wilderness in particular.”<sup>30</sup>

Although the potency of captivity myths remained strong, American mythology’s focus shifted again in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It “substituted” a “realistic” recognition of the American wilderness as both engaging and “restorative” in place of the Puritan’s howling and destructive devil’s den.<sup>31</sup> Benjamin Church’s 1716 publication, *Entertaining Passages Relating to Philip’s War*, marked the literary shift of this new, more-realistic mythology. In his adventurous accounts, Church employed the strength and heroism of the woodland hunter in place of the pious and hapless victim. He presented the wilderness as habitable—a place for the truly American. Church’s hunter-hero bridged the gap between the new and the archetypal American; it fostered both security and homeliness within the wooded periphery and formed a “manual of information about the Indians ...not a religious tract anathematizing them.”<sup>32</sup> The “changing attitude toward to character of the aboriginal, archetypal American (the Indian),” moreover, formed the foundation of this new mythology.<sup>33</sup> It was developed to unfold a “clear concept” and definition of a “representative Ameri-

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>27</sup> Wigglesworth, Michael. “God’s Controversy with New England,” in Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, XII (1871-1873), 83, 84. (1662)

<sup>28</sup> Etulain, *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*. 4.

<sup>29</sup> Etulain, *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 146; 180.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 180.

can”—a hunter-hero that was both English and American; both decidedly civilized and entirely natural.<sup>34</sup>

Enter John Filson’s 1784 portrayal of Daniel Boone. Presenting him as the archetypal yet ironic American frontier-hero, “the lover of the spirit of the wilderness...with acts of love and sacred affirmation [as] acts of violence against that spirit and her avatars,” Filson depicted Boone’s entrance into manhood as a “baptism by combat.”<sup>35</sup> Just as the Puritan’s strength required continual affirmations of their “Englishness” in the face of the wilderness, Boone’s struggles in addressing the muddled dividing line between the two cultures required a decisive dependence on the sword—or, in his case, the gun. The mythological shift is apparent, however, against Boone’s received worldview. Filson’s Boone is the “mediator between civilization and the wilderness” and stands on the pedestal of the secularly based “rationalistic philosophy” of the frontier.<sup>36</sup>

### *The Revised West and Progressive Historicism*

By the late nineteenth century, the old west was the new east and the focus of American mythology refitted with its new geography. The works of Frederick Jackson Turner defined a new era in American Western historiography. Governed not by “laws of man’s devising,” Turner’s western victors were a part of the “moral order of the universe, ruled by cosmic forces from above,” writes German Philosopher Frederick Schelling.<sup>37</sup> Driven by natural philoso-

phy and folk democracy, Turner’s work depicted the pioneers’ path through the Cumberland Gap as though it was down the triumphant streets of Rome and the sweat on their brows as though it was the laurel upon their head. Concerned with what “ought to be written” and “how these writings should bear on what other historians of the time were writing about the American past,” Turner’s model supplied a substantial primer to the modern historian.<sup>38</sup>

Turner desired to renovate the study of American history, including a more concentrated gaze on the “large role the frontier had played in shaping the American past,” illuminating the causes of national thought and politics.<sup>39</sup> “The real lines of American development, the forces dominating our character,” writes Turner, “are to be studied in the history of western expansion.”<sup>40</sup> He believed we must look past the memories and narratives of heroes to discover the “deeper” and broader “forces” that fashioned American uniqueness. He strove to write a truly democratic history, focused on the far west as the “physiographic province itself decreed that the destiny of this new frontier should be social rather than individual.”<sup>41</sup> Although writing at the turn of the twentieth century, Turner believed that “the story of the peopling of America [had] not yet been written. We do not understand ourselves.”<sup>42</sup> By transform-

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>35</sup> Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. 22.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>37</sup> Noble, David W. “Frederick Jackson Turner: The Machine and the Loss of the Covenant” in *Historians Against History: The Frontier Thesis and the National Covenant in American Historical*

*Writing since 1830*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965. 41.

<sup>38</sup> Etulain, *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*. 7.

<sup>39</sup> Billington, Ray. *Frederick Jackson Turner Historian, Scholar, Teacher* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

<sup>40</sup> Turner, Frederick Jackson. “Problems in American History,” *The Aegis*, November 4, 1892, repr. in *Early Writings*, 72.

<sup>41</sup> Turner, Frederick Jackson. “Contributions of the West to American Democracy,” in *Frontier in American History*. 258.

<sup>42</sup> *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner*. ed., Ray Allen Billington. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961), 25.



ing history from a discipline akin to literature to that of social science, Turner's philosophical idealism was extraordinarily "relativistic and presentist," writes historian William Cronon.<sup>43</sup>

"[Turner's model] pointed the way toward the pragmatic epistemological stance that would so characterize American progressive thought. Turner was nothing if not a progressive. The specific historical agenda he urged on his listeners had all the earmarks of an early, optimistic progressivism—just as his own argument predicted it would... [Turner's] story...was ultimately about evolution, a progressive narrative about the sequential stages of social growth that mimicked what Darwin had discovered in biology."<sup>44</sup>

Turner's progressivism colored his analytical essays and histories, as well as his romantic poems. In his May, 1883 poem, *The Poet of the Future*, Turner claimed,

The future poet "will find beauty in the useful and the common. ...In his ear humanity will whisper deep, inspiring words, and bid him give them voice. He will unite the logic of the present and the dream of the past, and his words will ring in the ears of generations yet unborn, telling them the grandeur of today which boils and surges with awakening life. He will reflect all the past and prophesy the future.

There is an unhindered flow of events—an inevitable progress—in Turner's thought. It is the "logic" of the present that "boils and surges with awakening life," while the incomplete past merely dreams. In accordance with Darwinian evolution, the broad progress of humanity—and its historiography—always flows from barbarism to civilization, from "dreams" to "logic." In his essay titled *The Frontier and American Institutions*, George Wilson Pierson concluded that Turner thought of the frontier "primarily in terms of nature, of geography, of physical environment."<sup>45</sup> Pierson termed such a hypothesis as a "kind of geographic or environmental determinism."

One illustration of this progressive determinism—the contact of barbarism and civilization—is Turner's "trading post." As the meeting ground of the primitive and the advanced, the western fur trade acted as the connection point and "transforming force" of western society.<sup>46</sup> As though a perfectly choreographed play, the trading post served as the stage of cultural and social evolution, while its actors—progressing from pioneers and Indians to that of colonists and yeoman—became the "pathfinder for civilization."<sup>47</sup> Understanding the primitive as a germ to be developed and "cultured,"—maybe even educated—Turner applauded civilizations effects on the West. Turner's providential veneer praised the drifting backwoodsman

---

<sup>43</sup> William Cronon. "Turner's First Stand: The Significance of Significance in American History," in *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*. ed., Richard W. Etulain. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991. 74.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

---

<sup>45</sup> George Wilson Pierson is a distinguished scholar in the field of American history and has long taught at Yale University. The essay quoted appeared in the early 1940's and provides one of the ablest and most comprehensive assaults on the Turner doctrine to date. Source: Pierson, George Wilson. "The Frontier and American Institutions: A Criticism of the Turner Theory," in *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*. ed., George Rogers Taylor. Lexington: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972. 74.

<sup>46</sup> Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Character and Influence of the Indian Trade in Wisconsin*. 3-5, 18, 19.

<sup>47</sup> Turner, *The Character and Influence of the Indian Trade in Wisconsin*. 19.

who “found too little elbow room in town life,” yet he exalted “the spirit of the pioneer’s ‘house raising.’”<sup>48</sup> The desire for open land and the need for community, Turner claimed, was “salvation of the Republic.”<sup>49</sup> He concluded his *Rise of the New West, 1819-1829* with valiance: “and on the frontier of the northwest, the young Abe Lincoln sank his axe deep in the opposing forest.”<sup>50</sup>

It is the availability of “free land” that formed Turner’s “material foundation of American democracy.” William Cronon concluded:

If free land and a return to the primitive were the chief causal forces in Turner’s model, then their consequences were the personal qualities Americans shared as a people and the democratic institutions they enjoyed as a republic. Because he had learned from Darwin to think of societies in organic terms, Turner articulated his thesis as a catalog of character traits that were the result of American evolution: independence, inventiveness, optimism, a passion for freedom.<sup>51</sup>

Although Turner’s thesis on western history revolutionized American historiography—seen even today when the chapters of modern textbooks advance in their discussion of western history from *Indians* to *explorers* to *farmers*—the social evolution at its core was highly problematic, for it inter-

prets the past in light of modern events.<sup>52</sup> In her 1987 book, *The Legacy of Conquest*, Patricia Limerick wrote that the true images of the American frontier—the broad plains, rushing rivers, and high mountains—never “found much of a home in [Turner’s historical] model.”<sup>53</sup> Although a scholar “with intellectual courage, an innovative spirit, and a forceful writing style,” Turner’s frontier was, simply, his own version of the frontier.<sup>54</sup> In his main thesis, *The Significance of History*, Turner wrote that each age “writes the history of the past anew” and with “a different ideal of history.” His words reverberate with a sense of historicism, replacing rational judgment with transient historical context. In objection to a later form of such erred reasoning, the twentieth century political philosopher, writer, and University of Chicago professor Leo Strauss wrote that historicism “imposes” a “single comprehensive view...on us by fate: the horizon within which all our understanding and orientation take place is produced by the fate of the individual or of his society.”<sup>55</sup> Simply, Turner’s thesis eradicated both natural right and justice in the realm of political order, leaving its actors on the complex stage of American history forever unknown and invariably worthless. Primarily concerned with “agrarian settlement” and “folk democracy,” Turner’s thesis appears to be problematic. With a single point of view, Turner’s work requires the reader to “stand in the East and look to the West.”<sup>56</sup> Thus depicted, Turner demands a sense of relativism within the sphere of historical reasoning. Believing that the frontier was

<sup>48</sup> Turner, Frederick Jackson. “Hunter Type,” in Jacobs, ed., *Frederick Jackson Turner’s Legacy*, 153, and “Middle Western Pioneer Democracy,” in *Frontier in American History*, 358.

<sup>49</sup> Turner, *Frederick Jackson Turner’s Legacy*, 153; “Middle Western Pioneer Democracy,” in *Frontier in American History*, 358.

<sup>50</sup> Turner, Frederick Jackson. *Rise of the New West: 1819-1829* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1906), 332.

<sup>51</sup> Cronon, *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*. 83.

<sup>52</sup> Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as a Symbol and Myth*. 250.

<sup>53</sup> Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of The American West*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987. 21.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-21.

<sup>55</sup> Strauss, Leo. *Natural Right and History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953. 27.

<sup>56</sup> Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of The American West*. 26.

“the meeting point between savagery and civilization,” Turner defined the outer bound of agricultural settlement as the outer bound of civilization.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, Turner’s solution to this important line between the tamed and the savage was the “theory of small landholdings that underlay the cult of the yeoman.”<sup>58</sup> With such a seemingly problematic and questionably unstable presentation of history, the frontier’s stage as well as its famed actors fell headlong into sustained folklore and myth.

Regardless of its intention, Turner’s work begs western historians to question whether American mythology should center on particular frontier experiences or on the broad and universal field of human action. Can aristocratic histories be written of democratic heroes? Should efforts be directed to consider individual action or universal progress? More particularly, how was it that a backcountry woodsman became an American cultural icon? With attentions directed by classical antiquity, however, the writings of Plutarch and Thucydides, of Xenophon and Homer tell us where to focus our efforts: at both heroes and their regimes; at particular actions and universal principles. It was Xenophon’s particular history of Cyrus the Great that illustrated the universal prudence of understanding human nature; Homer’s Achilles that illustrated pride, grief, and heroism within the ancient Greek world; and Thucydides’ Pericles—that orated “to be happy means to be free, and to be free means to be brave”—that illustrated the universal axioms of a democratic regime based in freedom and human virtue. The answer appears clear: it is through the mountain pass of both human thought and

action that the bedrock of human nature and the resulting political institutions are best understood; it is in the unifying of both history and poetry, of the particulars and the universals, that the true and objective life of Daniel Boone can be unveiled.

## CHAPTER TWO “Curiosity is Natural”

### *Of Wanderlust and Beginnings*

Born in the frontier town of Oley, Pennsylvania, on October 22, 1734, Daniel was the son of restless and dissenting Quaker immigrants.<sup>59</sup> Named after his mother’s brother, Reverend Daniel Morgan, or, perhaps, the notable Dutch painter, Daniel Boone, who was believed to be a distant relative, Daniel grew up on the western edge of European settlement. Unlike either of his namesakes, however, he was neither a reverend nor a painter—he was a woodsman.

His father, Squire Boone, emigrated from Exeter, in southwest England in 1713 with his brother George the younger and sister Sarah. They were sent by their father, George Boone, to act as family pathfinders—*pioneers*—to determine the validity of William Penn’s “liberty of conscience” that the province of Pennsylvania offered. The new land and liberty pleased them. Upon Squire’s beckoning, on August 17, 1717, George Boone removed his family from Devon’s serene meadows—remembered as “one of the most beautiful counties of Great Britain, a place of highland and moors covered with heather and bracken, high rocky hills, long pleasant valleys running down to the sea”—and sailed for the New World’s wild and unknown frontiers.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Turner, Frederick Jackson. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner, with a List of All His Works Compiled by Everett E. Edwards and an Introduction by Fulmer Mood*. (Madison, Wisconsin, 1938), p. 187.

<sup>58</sup> Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as a Symbol and Myth*. 252.

---

<sup>59</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 10.

<sup>60</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 1.

Although cautious and calculated, the Boone's were driven by freedom and land.

A weaver by trade, keeping "at least five or six looms going at one time," Squire was a man of many parts.<sup>61</sup> He was also, as early twentieth century historian Reuben Gold Thwaites noted, "a man of enterprise and vigor."<sup>62</sup> A single trade was not enough, for he was indeed a Boone—he needed land. On December 3, 1728, Squire bought a favorable tract of one hundred and forty-seven acres in New Britain Township, Bucks County. In characteristic Boone fashion, Squire again expanded his land holdings in 1730 with an adjoining 250 acre tract in Oley Township.<sup>63</sup> His land was remembered as a "beautiful, gently rolling country covered by hardwood forests that opened to grassy meadows."<sup>64</sup>

Squire employed his land for farming, his hand for blacksmithing and weaving and his mind for local government.<sup>65</sup> Self-reliant, patient and full of common sense,

Squire was well tailored for frontier life. He was a characteristic Boone: small statured, but "touched with restlessness, curiosity, an urge to move on."<sup>66</sup> He was also a tempered man, with curiosity always checked by caution. Whenever possible, Squire would "consider, ponder, reconnoiter," and examine the ground around him.<sup>67</sup> John Bakeless, Daniel Boone's first definitive biographer,<sup>68</sup> wrote in his book, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*, "[the Boones] had the itching foot. Something called. Something beyond the mountains always whispered. They heard the distant lands and knew that they must go there."<sup>69</sup> Driven always by freedom and the frontier, the Boones were "an adventurous breed" and "wanderers born."<sup>70</sup>

Upon Thomas Jefferys' 1776 *Map of Pennsylvania*, "Boone's Mill" rested in the picturesque Schuylkill River Valley, across from the "Quaker Meeting House" and on the main public road from Philadelphia to the frontier town of Tulpehocken.<sup>71</sup> Both near civilization and its border regions, the Boone settlement was a physical depiction of their historical reality: forever torn between white and native culture; between the civilized and the primitive.

Although often remembered for his restless curiosity and wanderlust, Daniel was his mother's son. Married on July 23, 1720, Sarah (Morgan) Boone was considered as "over the common size, strong and active, with black hair and eyes, and raised in the Quaker order," remembered her great-nephew, Daniel Bryan. She was also described as being "well calculated" like her

<sup>61</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 11.

<sup>62</sup> Thwaites, Reuben Gold. *Daniel Boone*. BiblioLife, 1923. 11.

<sup>63</sup> Modern day Berks County, PA. In Paul Wallace's book, *Daniel Boone in Pennsylvania*, he writes, "In the same year that Squire Boone bought the tract on Owatin Run, Mordecai Lincoln (great-great-grandfather of the President) bought a thousand acres in Amity (now Exeter) Township, not far from the Boones. His house is still standing, preserved as a monument to the President's forbearers. Daniel Boone was only two year old when Mordecai Lincoln died and was buried in the plot George Boone had given to the Oley Meeting. But Mordecai's sons were well known to all Squire Boone's children. Thomas Lincoln became a sheriff of the township. Abraham Lincoln...married Anne Boone, Daniel's cousin. ...Mordecai's son John (the President's great-grandfather) left Berks County at the same time Squire Boone did. So, indeed, did John Hanks, presumed great-grandfather of Abraham Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks."

<sup>64</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 10.

<sup>65</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 7; Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>68</sup> Opinion of Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 2.

<sup>69</sup> Bakeless, John. *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1939. 5.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 1.

<sup>71</sup> "Oley" is the Algonquian word for valley.

husband.<sup>72</sup> Her father, Edward Morgan of Bala, sailed for the New World in 1691 and settled with his family in the Moyamensing District of Philadelphia. Sarah descended from the Northern Welsh—or ancient Britons—Morgans of Merionethshire, whose typography is most renowned “for its mountain crags and mists” and, as the early twelfth century historian and priest Giraldus Cambrensis wrote, is most often considered as “the roughest and rudest of all the Welsh districts.”<sup>73</sup> They were an isolated, rugged but not impetuous people, lovers of liberty who preferred peace and happiness on “their own terms and in their own rugged world.”<sup>74</sup> In a sense, they were jealous of their liberty and sincere in their fidelity. In as much as typography can make a man, the Morgan family line was hewn from such rough and unique conditions. Sarah was no different. Nathan Boone, Daniel’s youngest son, in his 1851 interview with Lyman Draper, described his grandmother as “a woman of great neatness and industry” who was related to General Daniel Morgan, a hero in the American Revolution.<sup>75</sup> Peter Houston, Daniel’s future hunting companion and friend, wrote that “[Sarah] loved Daniel above all her children.”<sup>76</sup> He, in turn, was particularly devoted to her, as their bond was “intense” and “affectionate.”<sup>77</sup> Although Daniel was often wayward, Sarah praised his independence. Perhaps from the beginning, she understood that his curiosity was driven by a peculiar fervor for the wild crags and mists beyond the family farm.

<sup>72</sup> Draper, Lyman C. *The Life of Daniel Boone*. Ted Franklin Belue, ed. Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 1998. 111.

<sup>73</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 5.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>75</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 10

<sup>76</sup> Houston, Peter. *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Daniel Boone*. Ted Franklin Belue, ed. Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 1997. 12.

<sup>77</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 9

### *A Curiously Restless Youth*

Daniel Boone began his unwritten autobiography, “Curiosity is natural to the soul of man.”<sup>78</sup> For Daniel, however, this basic quality was uncontrollably inimitable. As long as there existed a frontier to be explored, Daniel was spellbound to be its *chief* explorer. If his father provided his itching foot and wanderlust, his mother provided his fervor for the frontier. With such a velocity his position was clear: forever onward into new directions and uncharted frontiers. This evident yet enigmatic curiosity of the frontier was visible from the beginning. Although a Quaker, Daniel’s pacifism was always “theoretical.”<sup>79</sup> His drive to know the unknown sometimes surpassed his concern for how others might worry about his extended absences, for Daniel’s adoration for the woods, his curiosity, and his general restlessness for the frontier trumped all else.

The woods of the early Pennsylvanian frontier teemed with life—deer, bear, buffalo, wild turkeys, and small game. It is believed that the nearby “Flying Hill” was so titled from the “perpetual flutter of wild turkeys there.”<sup>80</sup> Daniel was enchanted. As a youth, he was “delighted to range in the woods, watch the wild animals, and contemplate the beauties of uncultivated nature.”<sup>81</sup> He seemed to understand his destiny as a woodsman far before he entered the wild woods of the West. Between the ages of ten and seventeen, Daniel acted as the family herdsman. Pastoral life accustomed him to being near the woods, and he would often carry a club—“a grub dug up by the

<sup>78</sup> Boone, Daniel. *The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone, Formerly a Hunter; Containing a Narrative of the Wars of Kentucky, as Given by Himself*. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 13.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Peck, John Mason. “Life of Daniel Boone, The Pioneer of Kentucky” in *Makers of American History*. New York: The University Society, 1904. 4.

roots, nicely shaven down, leaving a rooty knob at the end, which he called his ‘herdsman club’”—with him and, along with the cattle, he would bring home many a dead bird or small game to the un-wanting family table.<sup>82</sup>

Silently creeping amidst the woods, he would toss his club at birds and small pray. With only *observation* and *experience* as his guide, he quickly became an apt scholar on “the peculiar habits of birds and wild animals,” writes a primary Boone historian, Lyman Draper.<sup>83</sup> Later, after his father bought him a “short-barreled rifle,” probably a large-caliber European fowling piece, he became an adept marksman and harvested more substantial game.<sup>84</sup> With such a tantalizing opportunity to neglect the family cattle, as he “became fond of life in the woods,”<sup>85</sup> Daniel ventured to the Flying Hills, Oley Hills, and Neversink Mountains—a modern day Nature Preserve and hiking trail—for extended winter hunts by the age of thirteen. Writing of such a time, Nathan Boone later remarked, “My father...would go hunting at the slightest opportunity,” or no opportunity at all.<sup>86</sup> Although he tried his hand at the family farm, blacksmith shop, and mill, Daniel “never took any delight in farming or stock raising” and was “ever unpracticed in the business of farming,” writes Daniel’s nephew, Daniel Boone Bryan.<sup>87</sup> Rather, Daniel always gravitated towards the woods. It was where his love for the chase deepened into a life-long passion; where his iron steadiness with a rifle and animal-like ability to subsist in nature deve-

loped and deepened. It was his frontier; it was his destiny.

Daniel was more than a natural woodsman; he was curious. At a young age, his peculiar curiosity found its way into mischief. Daniel befriended his father’s blacksmith, Henry Miller, although he was two or three years his senior. Lyman Draper described Daniel’s crony as,

raised on the outskirts of civilization, fearless of self-denials and hardship. Under an exterior somewhat rough was concealed a heart faithful in its friendships and generous in its impulses.<sup>88</sup>

They found in one another congenial and lively spirits of mischief and amusement. As the story goes, George Wilcoxon, a local man entirely inept and untrained in the practical uses of the musket, desired to try his hand at deer hunting. Needing to acquire a weapon, Wilcoxon borrowed Squire Boone’s and requested that he load the firearm the night before so it would be prepared for “early morning use.” During the night, Daniel and Henry unloaded the musket’s contents and added “half a dozen” times the usual load of powder, balls, and shot.<sup>89</sup> At the “peep of day,” however, and as Wilcoxon took the musket into the nearby forest, both boys had misgivings about their deed.<sup>90</sup> They feared that, by overloading the musket, it would burst upon firing, killing or seriously wounding the naïve and unsuspecting hunter. It was too late. Following the sunrise, the entire town was interrupted by the report of a “small canon” in its wooded periphery.<sup>91</sup> Running to the scene of the

<sup>82</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 11.

<sup>83</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 111.

<sup>84</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 4.

<sup>85</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 11-13.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-13.

<sup>87</sup> Daniel Boone Bryan to Draper, Feb. 27, 1843, Draper Manuscripts 22C5; Faragher, John Mack. *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1992. 31.

<sup>88</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 113.

<sup>89</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 12; Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 14; Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 113.

<sup>90</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 113.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 114; Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 5; Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 15; Boone,

crime, Daniel and Henry discovered the triumphant hunter alive. The explosion had knocked Wilcoxon over with only temporary—nonetheless bloody—injuries on his nose and forehead. In his 1851 interview, Nathan Boone described such wounds as a “gash in his forehead down to the skull...and badly bruised.”<sup>92</sup> Although Wilcoxon claimed to have shot a deer in the process, it is unclear whether his prize was ever discovered. Regardless, Daniel’s mischief had found a relief and the naïve hunter bragging rights.

Daniel was also restless. During the widespread smallpox epidemic of 1738-39, Daniel’s mother confined him and his siblings at home, to prevent their exposure to the disease. Four years old, Daniel found the solitary confinement of the Boone homestead irksome and he itched for freedom. Beyond his years, Daniel saw a solution: if he could take the disease, his mother would be forced to forgo his incarceration and allow him to wander without worry. After the rest of the house went to bed, Daniel and his older sister Elizabeth slipped out to the neighbor’s house and crept into bed with the smallpox patient. “Cheerfully anticipating the worse,” they awaited the sign of their freedom.<sup>93</sup>

It soon took. After Daniel confessed to the obvious truth with “childlike simplicity and without the least reserve,” Sarah Boone scolded him: “Thee naughty little gorrel, why did thee not tell me before so that I could have had thee better prepared?”<sup>94</sup> Sarah’s response is truly revealing—perhaps, even more so than Daniel’s actions. Her words are devoid of genuine surprise. She called him a “gorrel,” the old English equivalent of “lout,” and blames

him not for the act, but his naivety for not warning her beforehand. Sarah Boone seemed to understand Alexis de Tocqueville’s maxim: “The man is so to speak a whole in the swaddling clothes of his cradle.”<sup>95</sup>

### *A Natural Education*

As for Daniel’s education, little is known and much is “disputed.”<sup>96</sup> In 1748, the German Reverend Henry Melchior Muhlenberg critiqued Oley’s school, writing, “In Oley sind die Schulen sehr entfernt.”<sup>97</sup> It appears that these “sehr entfernt” (very isolated) schools were a part of the Lutheran church, making it hard—on both accounts—for a Quaker child living on the frontier to attend. Later in life, Daniel was in the habit of telling his children that he never attended any formal schooling. With “his hand writing...a scrawl,” Daniel’s “spelling always had a wild, free, original flavor, like his life,” writes historian John Bakeless.<sup>98</sup> It appears as though the entirety of our young hunter’s education was at home—or in the woods.

In his father’s hearth and shop he learned a practical knowledge. Although the particulars of his book learning remain unclear, according to legend, Daniel’s uncle John Boone attempted to school him in the ways of the letter. Daniel’s flawed orthography, however, quickly frustrated him, wherein Squire responded, “Let the girls do the spelling and Dan will do the shooting.”<sup>99</sup>

---

*My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone* 13. The story in its entirety can be found in any of these volumes.

<sup>92</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 13.

<sup>93</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 14.

<sup>94</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 110.

<sup>95</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*. trans., ed., Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000. 28.

<sup>96</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 4.

<sup>97</sup> Roughly translated, “In Oley, the schools are very distant.” Quote taken from *The Governor’s Messages and Reports of the Heads of Departments of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, Part II. 1877.

<sup>98</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 10.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

Although his letters, orders, survey books, and accounts display “creative spelling” and an education never perfected, Daniel’s children and grandchildren later remarked that he was a lifelong lover of reading and wrote “eloquently.”<sup>100</sup>

In the woods Daniel learned a natural knowledge, based upon the “open volume of nature.”<sup>101</sup> He quickly became an adept scholar of the lingua franca of the forest, as his “strength of mind, keen habits of observation, and imperturbable tranquility under ...perils” were the fundamental building blocks for his unrivaled success under these natural and feral volumes. Late nineteenth century historian John S. C. Abbott wrote of such perfection:

No marksman could surpass him in the dexterity with which his bullet he would strike the head of a nail, at the distance of many yards. No Indian hunter or warrior could with more sagacity trace his steps through the pathless forest, detect the footsteps of a retreating foe, or search out the hiding place of the panther or the bear.<sup>102</sup>

*Observing* the lessons of the snow and the leaf, of the moss and the track, and of the movement and the prowess of the Indian warrior, and *experiencing* the wonders and complexities of the forest’s ebbs and flows, of the stars awakening in reverence, and of the flowers’, animals’ and mountains’ reflected wisdom, Daniel’s scholarship in

the school of the forest was refined at an early age.<sup>103</sup>

According to the Greek historian, soldier, philosopher, and contemporary of Socrates, Xenophon, Daniel had the very best of educations. Believing that the “first efforts of a youth emerging from boyhood should be directed to the institution of the chase,” he offered his own advice for the rearing and education of boys:

My advice to the young is, do not despise hunting or the other training of your boyhood, if you desire to grow up to be good men, good not only in war but in all else of which the issue is perfection in thought, word, and deed.<sup>104</sup>

Xenophon believes that the education of the hunt provides most all that is needed to become a man. As it molds a “sound soul,” trained and readied for the “real world of actual things,” the hunt deprives youths of “evil pleasures,” which ought “never to be learned.”<sup>105</sup> Moreover, and maybe more importantly, it instills in the hunter “a passion for manly virtue.”<sup>106</sup> It is he who is educated by the hunt, Xenophon writes, that is “the true noble” and a blessing to his family and community.<sup>107</sup> In his essay, *On Hunting*, Xenophon wrote that a youth filled with curiosity, the hunt, and the love of the woods “will prove a blessing to [his] parents, and not to [his] parents only but to the whole state; to every citizen alike and individual friend.”<sup>108</sup>

Although Daniel’s early life was “unpracticed” in farming, mischievous in nature, and governed by supreme wander-

<sup>100</sup> It is generally accepted that his favorite books, which he had on him always, was the Bible and Gulliver’s Travels. Source: Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. xii.

<sup>101</sup> Thwaites, *Daniel Boone*. 10.

<sup>102</sup> Abbott, John S. *Daniel Boone: The Pioneer of Kentucky*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1874. 42-43.

<sup>103</sup> This last part is taken from Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essay on Nature, Chapter 1.

<sup>104</sup> Xenophon, “On Hunting” in *Selections*. H. G. Dakyns. 224-225.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 274-275.

<sup>107</sup> Xenophon, *Selections*. 274-275.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 281.



lust, his character was forever impressed by such an adventurous and curious youth, for it was reared in an atmosphere of freedom, illimitable forests, and the hunt.

### CHAPTER THREE In *His Woods*

“Start now on that farthest western way, which does not pause at the Mississippi or the Pacific, nor conduct toward a worn-out China or Japan, but leads on direct a tangent to this sphere, summer and winter, day and night, sun down, moon, down, and at last earth down too.”

—*Walden*, Henry David Thoreau

#### *The Pisgah Vision*

There it was—the Promised Land. Standing atop the “commanding ridge” of Pilot Knob in June 1769, the thirty-four year old woodsman beheld miles of fabled forests cloaked in a blue haze and fused with sensuous and untouched gardens. It was Daniel Boone’s first glimpse of the Great Meadow, the epic Bluegrass Island. It was a land “well calculated to impress the beholder with a reverential sense of the stupendous works of the Almighty Architect.”<sup>109</sup> It was a vision of Eden; it was a hunter’s paradise; it was *Kanta-ke*. Daniel remembered,

Just at the close of day the gentle gales retired, and left the place to the disposal of a profound calm. Not a breeze shook the most tremulous leaf. I had gained the summit of a commanding ridge, and, looking round with astonishing delight, beheld the ample plains, the beauteous tracts below. On the other hand, I surveyed the famous river Ohio that rolled in silent dignity, marking the western boundary of Kentucke with incon-

ceivable grandeur. At a vast distance I beheld the mountains lift their venerable brows, and penetrate the clouds. All things were still.

Such a calm and still moment was Daniel’s Pisgah vision—Pisgah was the biblical mountain in which Moses ascended to view the Land of Canaan after years of wandering in the wilderness. Unlike Moses, however, Daniel’s destiny lay in front of him. In such a “pure white moment,” to quote Mary Oliver’s poem, *Such Singing in the Wild Branches*, Daniel remembered, “No populous city, with all the varieties of commerce and stately structures, could afford so much pleasure to my mind, as the beauties of nature I found here.” It was a land of promise—of milk and honey—and of destiny. Like Moses, however, Daniel first had to “wander.”

#### *The Yadkin*

If Daniel’s early youth forever impressed his character, his family’s move to North Carolina’s Yadkin Valley in 1750 entirely captivated his mind’s curiosity and gave a supreme outlet to his soul’s restlessness. The mid-eighteenth century saw a steady stream of settlers migrating to the rich and now pricy lands of the Pennsylvanian frontier. It was a land steadily bled, cleared, and plowed by the first pioneer families—ripe for the homesteading frontiersman. Daniel’s woods became populated and the game of its near periphery receded. Squire Boone and his family found the growing countryside of Berks County unpleasant and disagreeable as early as 1748. Maybe, perhaps, “something called... something beyond the mountains... whispered.”<sup>110</sup> Lyman Draper wrote,

---

<sup>109</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 177.

<sup>110</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 5.

“The choice lands of the settlement were all located, and as more homesteads were needed, it became a matter of much concern and inquiry to what new, fertile, and salubrious country they could migrate where the right to the soil could be cheaply purchased.”<sup>111</sup>

Procuring new land for cheap was an electrifying proposal. America was, in one sense, a land for the taking. It did not require a title, a name, or wealth. Instead, capturing the American opportunity required a steadfast mind, hardy family, and, most importantly, an iron soul. Maybe, perhaps, it required an American soul. Robert Morgan noted, “All a man needed was a wife, a gun, and two hands to work.”<sup>112</sup> Underneath this opportunity rested the ancient, prominently European myth of a new Eden, discovered beyond the sea or the mountains. The call of the American West was, for some, a search for this New Canaan. For others, it was for new beginnings. For the Boone’s however, it was a place to spread out—a place to satisfy their curiosity, and to house their wanderlust.

By 1749, Squire’s family had increased to eleven children and his once “gently rolling countryside” undulated with neighbors. Additionally, the farming of those days exhausted the soil. Early eighteenth century frontier agriculture was based solely on yield. John Bakeless noted, “There was no rotation of crops and little fertilization of the fields.”<sup>113</sup> The land was plentiful; there was always more of it. However, if the fall harvest were lacking, there would be no family alive to plant in the spring. Yield and not sustainability, therefore, was the only consideration, for, if the land became infertile, the horizon

forever promised fertility. One had to fight not only the restraining and arduous geographic elements of the untamed frontier but the climate and native cultures within such elements as well.

It appears that during the early spring of 1749, already pestered by growing populations at home, Squire would have seen dozens of settler families passing through Exeter to the deeper frontier of Shenandoah River and its great interior valley. Squire’s familial need and “itching foot” was spurred on by the reports brought back by the adventurous pioneers of the “fertility and beauty of those solitudes, where conscience was free, labor voluntary, and a comfortable living easily obtained.”<sup>114</sup> Important for Daniel, however, such pioneers were also cloaked in their great success on the hunt. Already, Joseph Stover, Daniel’s uncle, had emigrated to the headwaters of the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. It was with Joseph that Squire had immigrated to the New World forty years before, and, perhaps, it was because of Joseph’s success within the great interior valley that Squire finally chose to move his family into the deeper frontier. The decision appears to have been made immediately, during the winter of 1749-50. In the January, 1750 Minutes of the Woman’s Meeting of the Exeter Quakers, Sarah Boone is recorded to have requested a letter of transfer “to Friends in Virginia, Carolina or elsewhere.”<sup>115</sup> On April 11, Squire sold his entire Exeter homestead to his cousin, William Mogridge, for £300.<sup>116</sup> Spring had dawned.

The snows had melted and its white blanket vanished but there were no cattle in Boone’s fields, no fiber in Boone’s mill, and no fire in Boone’s shop. The founding family of Exeter Township was once again

<sup>111</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 124.

<sup>112</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 28.

<sup>113</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 17.

<sup>114</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 124.

<sup>115</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 26.

<sup>116</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 18.

on the move to new frontiers. With their “small drove of cattle,” the Boone family departed the Pennsylvanian countryside on May 1 for the fertile and open lands of the southwest.<sup>117</sup> Their destination: the true frontier.

Sure of only their direction, the Boone family packed into three or four Conestoga wagons. Distinctive in shape and size, large teams of five or more horses were required to drive these large vessels. They were built with the West in mind: their haul was uniquely designed with curved floors to prevent shifting or bending over the rough terrain; sturdy and waterproof white canvas stretched across their wooden frames to protect against inclement weather; their carrying capacity of 12,000 pounds accommodated large families and their goods. Most importantly, however, the Conestoga design was heavy—even freight-like—and capable of traversing long distances; capable of transporting the East to the West.

It is believed that the party included Squire’s nine unmarried children, ranging from 3 to 19 years of age, two married sons and daughter-in-laws, and his married daughter with her husband and baby and, perhaps, some extended family as well. Squire, the patriarch, led the party of 18 or more, and Daniel, the 16-year-old accomplished woodsman, guided its path. With his gun on his shoulder and his eye due southwest, Daniel’s job was to scout for the trail, game, and any potential harm lurking in the near periphery of the wagon train.

It was customary for the women to ride in the wagons while the men fought the trail and lumbered behind driving the cattle. In this case, however, Daniel was in front of the line. Perhaps Squire knew that, if trusted with the cattle, Daniel would become lost in the chase and forget about his duties. Like his uncle, General Daniel Morgan, who was described as “a man of great bodily

strength” who “fearlessly encounter[ed] the perils of the wilderness,” Daniel now led his family into the mysterious country of the American Southwest. The Boone’s wanderlust—their itching foot—was quelled, if only for the moment.

Daniel’s compass always pointed due west. After crossing the Schuylkill and taking Harris’s Ferry across the Susquehanna, the Boone’s bid adieu to Pennsylvania. Traversing through the Maryland countryside and crossing the Potomac at Williamsport, the Boone family entered into the great valley of Virginia. Their path is known today as the Allegheny Trail. Making fifteen miles a day, Daniel’s role as guide was crucial: the wagons needed cleared and dry trails and their inhabitants needed sustenance. Although their approximate route can today be traced by U.S. highways, Daniel’s deep knowledge of the woods and navigation was truly put to the test. Curving with the Appalachian Mountains, Daniel adeptly navigated through the “principle artery” connecting the Indian peoples of the north to those of the south. Employing his experience with Indian traces and his understanding of centuries old Indian communication customs, he guided his family safely through the “Virginian Road,” now U.S. 11, and fed them well along the way.

Nathan Boone later remarked that William Boone, the third son of George Boone, Daniel’s brother, told him that the Boone party “tarried two years on Linville Creek in Virginia.”<sup>118</sup> Linville Creek’s name originated from one of its earliest residents, who is believed to have been “slain by Indians in the mountain region above the head of the Yadkin.”<sup>119</sup> It was also the home of Squire’s old friend John Lincoln. In 1779 Daniel would return to Linville Creek to personally lead John’s son, Abraham Lincoln, through the Cumberland Gap and into

---

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>118</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 12.

<sup>119</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 125.

Kentucky, where he would construct a small but historic log cabin. Without an adept and skilled woodsman as their guide, who knows if Lincoln's journey into the wilderness would have been detrimental to their family line?

The Boone's camped a few miles from modern day Harrisonburg, Rockingham County, Virginia, and remained for one to two growing seasons. This pause, however, irked Daniel's restless soul. It was during this time in 1750 that Daniel's love for the long hunt began. While his family remained to farm, Daniel bent to the patterns derived from his youth amidst woodland Indian cultures and began his extended forays into the wilderness for fur, wild game and, most importantly, adventure. Daniel, accompanied by his childhood comrade Henry Miller, left the banks of Linville Creek and traveled past the Shenandoah Mountains and down the Roanoke River near the Big Lick. Their hunt took them deeper southwest than either of the young hunters had ever been. From the Big Lick, they followed the eastern path through the Roanoke Gap, traveling through the Blue Ridge and then south into the great Piedmont country. Through the rich canebrakes, the young hunters tracked bear, elk, deer, panthers, wildcats, and wolves. Perhaps even a buffalo. After a fruitful summer and early fall, the hunters took their harvest of hides north to Philadelphia, reaping substantial gain from its needing markets.

Henry Miller later remembered this extended hunting expedition as the great turning point of his life. Both Daniel and Henry had tasted the sublimity of the West; they had reaped its bountiful harvest, yet the frontier's peculiar power operated quite differently on the two souls. They were both at the age when young men catch sight of their own paths and begin to see their destiny. Although they were great friends and woodsmen, their 1750 extended frolic in the wilderness revealed divergent traces.

While Henry would become a substantial landholder and establish a notable and highly profitable ironworks in Augusta County, Virginia, Daniel's venture was forever westward. While the experience fostered the desire for home in the first, it fostered the inner wanderlust of the frontier in the other. If the horizon's call—its providential hand—had thus far been unclear to Daniel, its glorious rays were now plainly understood.

Daniel's wanderlust was not alone, however. While he was away on his long hunt, land records reveal that Squire Boone's restless spirit was also irked by the family's pause. During the fall of 1750, Squire ventured ahead of his family to North Carolina to speculate land. By October, he had filed a warrant claiming six hundred and forty acres near the banks of the Yadkin River near Grants Creek. One historian remembered the Yadkin as a "clear, rapid-flowing mountain stream, offering excellent opportunities for mill sites."<sup>120</sup> It was a land "punctuated by beautiful meadows, perfect for grazing livestock, and well-watered lowlands where the soil was fertile clay, brick-red when plowed and exposed to the sun."<sup>121</sup> The Forks of the Yadkin bore striking contrast to the black soil Squire was accustomed to in Pennsylvania. He had selected the site himself, amongst the thousands of square miles up for the taking by the Earl of Granville—who owned a great majority of the northern quadrant of the Colony. It was a wilder and more diverse land than Pennsylvania. The Yadkin River Valley was the extreme western frontier of Anglo settlement. Squire's choice land ultimately boasted a scenic overlook of the Yadkin River in what was then Rowan County—today Davidson County, North Carolina.<sup>122</sup> Upon this hill he would build the first family

---

<sup>120</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 29.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>122</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 19.

cabin. Although driven by wanderlust, Squire had found his home.

After Daniel returned from the north and Squire from the south, their family rededicated their wagons once again. From Linville Creek the family traveled directly to Squire's land on the Forks, a near 300-mile journey. Records of their journey are sparse, but they must have settled on the land by late 1751. Rumor suggests that, because they reached the land late in the year, the family spent their first North Carolinian winter in a cave near the river—known today as “Boone's Cave.” More likely, however, Squire established a cabin on his mount by late 1751 with the help of his sons. In either case, the Boone's presence was felt in February of the following year when a neighboring plot of land was described as being oriented “on the E. side of the path that leads from Sandy Creek Ford to Squire Boon's.”<sup>123</sup> Lyman Draper's notes also record that, by autumn of 1752, Squire's daughter, Elizabeth, was wedded in the Yadkin Valley to one William Grant, “a native of Maryland who had been some years residing in that region.”<sup>124</sup> By 1753, Squire had purchased two additional 640-acre tracts of land for his growing family, near modern day Mocksville, North Carolina.<sup>125</sup> Although the location of the Boone homestead changed and its landholdings increased immensely, “the Boones transplanted to the Yadkin a landscape of kinship very similar to the one they had left behind in Pennsylvania.”<sup>126</sup>

### *Nature's Call*

In 1700, the English explorer, ecologist, and writer John Lawson observed that the Yadkin Valley was

very good and free from Grubs and Underwood. A man near Sapona [the Yadkin] may more easily clear ten Acres of Ground than in some places he can one...That day we passed through a delicious Country (none that I ever saw exceeds it.) We saw fine bladed grass six feet high, along the Banks of these pleasant Rivulets.<sup>127</sup>

As “giant sycamores and tulip poplars, eight, ten, or sometimes fourteen feet in diameter” capped the valley's bottomlands, the chief labor of its settlers lay in the clearing of fields—a task achieved by girdling.<sup>128</sup> It was a grueling but effective process of frontier settlement. By “hacking rings” around the tree's entire circumference, the tree would slowly choke, as the “lifeblood of sap in the bark from root to branch tips” was cut off.<sup>129</sup> Thus strangled, the commanding tree would slowly rot, dropping meager branches the first year and large limbs the second. Such girdled trees would inevitably fall, leaving the remaining fields open for the plow. It was a long and drawn out process, a process that Daniel could live without.

In the spring of 1751, the Boone family set out to clear their new homestead. Such a task is somewhat unimaginable for modern man. To open a land that had continual cover for thousands of years was no small task. The forest was dense and its roots were deep. It was an old land with old stories, comparable perhaps to J.R.R. Tolkien's mythical Fangorn Forest. Speak-

---

<sup>123</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 30.

<sup>124</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 125.

<sup>125</sup> Brown, Meredith Mason. *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008. 10.

<sup>126</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 30.

---

<sup>127</sup> Lawson, John. *History of North Carolina*. Charlotte: Observer Printing House, 1903.

<sup>128</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 34.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

ing of such age, Treebeard, Tolkien's elder tree, declared,

'I am not going to tell you my name, not yet at any rate.' A queer half-knowing, half-humorous look came with a green flicker into his eyes. 'For one thing it would take a long while: my name is growing all the time, and I've lived a very long, long time; so my name is like a story. Real names tell you the story of things they belong to in my language, in the Old Entish as you might say. It is a lovely language, but it takes a very long time saying anything in it, because we do not say anything in it, unless it is worth taking a long time to say, and to listen to.'

Unlike his family, Daniel's spirit longed for the living woods and the vitality of the hunt—not for the rotting wooded corpses of his father's fields. He hungered to hear the "lovely language" of the wood's real name.

One could imagine the majority of Daniel's prayers were pleas for rain. Not in the same custom that the farmer prays but in an earnest desire to capture its precious gift: an afternoon away from the plow and in the woods. Perhaps Daniel was the sort who felt the forest's beating heart audible during the rain, as the air was more elevated, smell more intimate, and sound more animated. Perhaps Daniel felt alone in the woods; alone with his thoughts and safe within its wooded and damp succulence.

It was during Daniel's early years on the Yadkin that his reputation as a notable trapper, guide, and woodsman flourished. By his late teens, Daniel was widely known in the Yadkin as a superior trapper and formidable marksman. Although Penn's woods provided him with ample room for adventure to satisfy his inner curiosity and deep wanderlust, the Yadkin was the true frontier.

It was a world similar to what his father experienced in early Pennsylvania over 30 years prior; a world with little Anglo contact; and a raw and coarse—uncharted and rough—world similar to his mother's Welsh homeland. It was a new start with infinite possibilities. The virgin periphery of the setting sun always drew Daniel towards its fleeting rays. Now, however, he was closer to it than ever.

Although "The West" is most often categorized by the gunslinger cowboys of the latter half of the nineteenth century, the true frontier saga of the American West began centuries earlier on the eastern side of the Appalachians. While the cattle drivers, cowboys, and prairie Indians present a highly romantic epic of lead and powder—of engine and rail—it was the early "pedestrian sod-busters who tamed the bulk of the West."<sup>130</sup> The initial pioneers sought freedom by land and desired the equality and life only the frontier could offer. By the late seventeenth century, the British colonial arm stretched the breadth of the Atlantic seaboard from modern day New Hampshire to Georgia. This coastal belt quickly became overcrowded and the colonists needed more land. Territorial expansion could proceed in only one direction: west, into the uncharted primordial wilderness beyond the wooded periphery and into the shadows of the Appalachian Mountains. In his book, *The Mammoth Book of the West*, Jon E. Lewis painted the early west as:

The unknown and magic forest land which lay beyond the cultivated fields of the tidewater colonialists and stretched away to the forbidding ridges of the Appalachians, which walled the coastal plain.<sup>131</sup>

---

<sup>130</sup> Lewis, Jon E. *The Mammoth Book of The West: The Making of the American West*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1996. (xii).

<sup>131</sup> Lewis, *The Mammoth Book of The West: The Making of the American West*. 10.

Under these magical and “forbidden ridges” Daniel’s frontier saga began. One could imagine he perched on his father’s scenic overlook leaning on his rifle with his eyes fixed on the setting sun, every moment his soul growing in proportion to the sun’s sublime retreat beyond the wooded canopy. From his cabin door, the distant and majestic ridges of the Allegheny Mountains, “rising six thousand feet into the clouds,” pierced his soul and tempted his dreams.<sup>132</sup>

John Bakeless noted that “no roads ran that way except the ‘Warriors’ Path,’ a mere ‘trace’ used only by red hunters or war parties.”<sup>133</sup> Such a path, if it could be found, would lead through the Ouasioto, or Cumberland, Mountains and into the deep west of Kentucky’s inner valleys.<sup>134</sup> Ouasioto was either a Wyandotte or Shawnee word: *scioto*, meaning “Deer’s Path.”<sup>135</sup> In his *Indian Trails of the Southeast*, historian William E. Myer wrote that the *Warriors’ Path* was “almost invisible, save to the practiced eye of the Indian.” The Appalachians stood as a tangled wooded blockade and its concealed path into the West a mystery. For now, Daniel’s eyes were alone able to follow the sun, for no white man knew the way the path twisted, turned, and ultimately vanished through the mountains.

### *Meeting of Woodsmen*

“Fate came plodding down the Yadkin Valley Road one day, leading a pack-horse,” wrote John Bakeless.<sup>136</sup> For the mo-

ment, such fortune was personified as a backwoods and itinerant Irish peddler. His name was John Findley (some historians spell his name John Finely). It had been fourteen years since his and Daniel’s paths crossed on Braddock’s 1755 campaign, where Findley filled fireside tales with accounts of a great meadowland beyond the mountains.<sup>137</sup> He described a land of “cane and clover,” of “fertile valleys,” and “wild game...beyond [imagination].”<sup>138</sup> Beyond the sublime and Edenic romance, however, Findley spoke of “great profits for hunters, trappers, and traders.”<sup>139</sup> He had recently returned from a fur trading expedition with the Shawnee at Blue Licks Town, or *Skipaki-thiki*.<sup>140</sup> The name *Skipaki*, is Shawnee for “blue” and *thiki* means “place.”<sup>141</sup> However, the Iroquois Confederacy referred to such a region as *Kanta-ke*, an Iroquois word meaning meadows or fields. While there is much disagreement and debate over the lexical origins of the name *Kentucky*, it would appear that Americans favored the Iroquois place name—*Kanta-ke*—over that of the Shawnees—*Skipaki-thiki*.

Although the great and vast expanse of the American frontier tended to engulf and even scatter men, fate seemed to blow John Findley directly to the doorstep of Daniel Boone’s log cabin in 1768 or 1769 (in his interview with Lyman Draper, Nathan Boone was unsure of the exact date). Bakeless remarked, “[Findley] was just one more of those itinerant merchants who wandered with their moveable stores among

<sup>132</sup> Abbott, John S. *Daniel Boone: The Pioneer of Kentucky*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1874. 51.

<sup>133</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 15.

<sup>134</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 207.

<sup>135</sup> Harrison, Lowell H., Dawson Nelson L. *A Kentucky Sampler: Essays from The Filson Club History Quarterly 1926—1976*. University Press of Kentucky, 1977. 16.

<sup>136</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 44.

<sup>137</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 17.

<sup>138</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 70.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>141</sup> Hanna, Charles A. *The Wilderness Trail: The Ventures and Adventurers of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path*. New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1911. 256.

the backwoods settlements.”<sup>142</sup> His fortuitous stop at Daniel’s hearth, however, would prove a unique and exceptionally promising reward for both of them. Many years later, Nathan Boone remembered that, after stabling his “spare nags,” Findley and his father spent hours in front of the warm fire talking of “Kaintuck.” A year earlier in 1767, Daniel had attempted and failed to reach Kentucky by route of the Big Sandy River.<sup>143</sup> Findley believed that the Cherokee Indians frequented a warpath—a meager trace—that crossed the mountains.<sup>144</sup> He was an Indian trader and impressed Daniel with his knowledge of the Ohio, but knew little of its interior valleys.

While spindling his yarn beside Daniel’s fire, Findley rehearsed his 1752 trip down the Ohio in a canoe.<sup>145</sup> After landing on Kentucky’s shore near the mouth of Big Bone Creek, he met a company of Shawnee headed into the interior of Kentucky. Findley was “invited” to attend their expedition. Readily assenting and fearing for his life, his travels ultimately landed him at an Indian settlement near Lulbegrud Creek of the northern tributary of the Red River in Kentucky.<sup>146</sup> Lyman Draper noted the Indian settlement was “directly on the route of the great *Warriors’ Road* leading from the Ohio southward through the Cumberland Gap.”<sup>147</sup> It also appears to be the settlement in which Benjamin Franklin referenced when he claimed, “in the year 1752, the Six Nations, Shawanese and Delawares had a large town

on the Kentucke River.”<sup>148</sup> What Findley witnessed during this expedition could only be compared with the perfections and supreme bounty of Genesis’ Eden.

[Buffalo] herds so huge that a man had to be careful lest he be crushed to death in their mad stampedes. The ground rumbling with their hoofs. At the Falls of the Ohio, wild geese and ducks so plentiful there was no need even to kill them. All a man could eat were drawn by the current over the falls and thrown up freshly killed on the banks below. One might pick up enough fresh fowl for dinner any day. And land—land such as a man might dream of. Well watered, lush and green, with fertile soil in all directions. Endless acres for the taking. A settler’s paradise. A hunter’s paradise, too, with deerskins at a dollar each.<sup>149</sup>

Findley’s “enthusiastic love of nature” betrayed, perhaps, his descriptions of Kentucky as the land of plenty as described in the Bible.<sup>150</sup> His stories, however tainted, found in Daniel an ardent and devoted audience. Fellow hunter and personal friend, Peter Houston, wrote in his 1842 *Sketch of the Life and Character of Daniel Boone*, “[Findley’s] description enthused Daniel Boone who never rested until” his soul beheld the great meadow beyond the horizon. Draper went so far to note that Findley’s recital revived Daniel’s soul, writing that it sparked “feelings of peculiar delight” in his bosom.<sup>151</sup>

Findley and Daniel both attempted to cross into the Promised Land via a mountain pass. Both had failed in their own way.

<sup>142</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 44.

<sup>143</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 23.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>145</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 205.

<sup>146</sup> Lyman Draper noted in his history of Daniel Boone that the name of Lulbegrud was given to the stream by a party of early explorers encamped on its banks, who happened to have a copy of *Gulliver’s Travels* with them, from which they derived the unpleasing appellation.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 205.

<sup>148</sup> Franklin, Benjamin. *Ohio Settlement*, London, 1772, p. 44.

<sup>149</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 45.

<sup>150</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 207.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.



Although an adept trader and hunter, and although he could navigate the Ohio with ease, Findley was somewhat disoriented on land. Bakeless noted that Findley “knew nothing of trails overland.”<sup>152</sup> His trading relations with the Cherokee Indians had taught him that many Indian and buffalo traces connected the coastal lands of the East to the inner valleys of the West, but his insufficient skills as a woodsman prevented him from finding them.

Daniel, on the other hand, lacked both the knowledge of such traces and an understanding of what the great meadow—*Kanta-ke*—of Kentucky looked like. This may seem plain or even facetious, but there were no markers or road signs over the mountains informing the victorious pioneer that he had indeed made it to the rich lands of Kentucky. The previous year, in 1767, Daniel had set out with his brother Squire and their comrade William Hill up the Big Sandy River in search of Kentucky. Hill was Daniel’s friend, frequent hunting companion, and “crony.”<sup>153</sup> Nathan Boone later remarked that Hill was “a man after my father’s own heart. He was fond of the wilderness, hunting, and wild adventure—a jolly good companion for such a lonely life.” Nathan continued in a jocular tone that Hill and Daniel “made an agreement that whoever should die first would return and give the other information about the spirit world. Hill died first, but Father used to say he never received the promised intelligence.”<sup>154</sup> In fact, William Hill died shortly after their 1767 journey up Big Sandy.<sup>155</sup>

Believing that Sandy would empty into the Ohio, providing a natural entrance into Kentucky, the three woodsman crossed the Blue Ridge and Alleghenies in autumn and proceeded to cross the Holston and

Clinch rivers near their mountain sources. From there, they reached the Russell Fork of Kentucky’s Big Sandy River. They traveled about one hundred miles up its banks, just west of the Cumberland Mountains. Early nineteenth century frontier historian George Bancroft asserted, “Streams are the guides which God has set for the stranger in the wilderness” and strangers they were.<sup>156</sup> Although situated near what would later become Young’s Salt Works, a meager ten miles due west of modern day Prestonsburg, Floyd County, Kentucky, the weary travelers became disheartened, as they had been “ketchd in a snow storm.”<sup>157</sup> Lyman Draper wrote,

As the country thus far had been forbidding, quite hilly, and much over-run with laurel...they abandoned all hopes of finding Kentucky by this route and made the best of the way back to the Yadkin.<sup>158</sup>

The tired woodsmen, faced by a strong winter storm and perilous conditions, failed to realize that they had made it to Kentucky. Maybe they mistook Sandy’s Levisa Fork for the headwaters of the Louisa, which instead placed them many miles outside of Kentucky’s borders. Regardless, only a few miles had separated them from the fertile plains and great meadow of legend.

The ironic meeting of these two ingenerate woodsmen in 1768 or 1769, therefore, was providential to say the least. Daniel’s soul was at a peculiar junction—a turning point. In fact, John Bakeless goes so far to say that Findley “was [Daniel’s] turning point.”<sup>159</sup> Daniel was anxious. On

<sup>152</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 47.

<sup>153</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 25.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>155</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 197.

<sup>156</sup> Bancroft, George. *History of the Colonization of United States*. Boston: Charles C Little and James Brown, 1841. 188.

<sup>157</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 196; Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 25.

<sup>158</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 196.

<sup>159</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 46.

his farm, his family made a meager living and his soul was uneasy. His failed expeditions and land speculations landed him in debt. The Yadkin Valley was teeming with life but not the life that Daniel sought. Families settled by the day and land that had been used for hunting and adventurous pleasures steadily became occupied. Lyman Draper noted that, by 1768, game was “so scarce” in the Yadkin “as to render a roast wild turkey or venison steak quite a rarity.”<sup>160</sup>

Findley desired to enter Kentucky by land and deeply required the assistance of an experienced woodsman. On the other hand, Daniel, irked by his recent failures and his restlessness in the Yadkin, could follow any trace and navigate almost anywhere. Fused together, the woodsmen could find and follow the Indian’s *Warrior’s Path* through the Appalachians and fulfill their “long-cherished ideal of terrestrial beauty and perfection” and finally discover their *Kanta-ke*.<sup>161</sup>

### *Paradise*

On the first of May 1769, an anxious band of woodsman departed Daniel Boone’s cabin.<sup>162</sup> Their compass pointed due west and their destination was the horizon. With Daniel in the lead and John Findley close behind, the expedition’s team was comprised of Daniel’s brother-in-law John Stuart as hunter and Joseph Holden, James Mooney, and William Cooley as “camp-keepers.”<sup>163</sup> This was a practice that Daniel employed profusely later in life. As long as the trip went to plan, both Daniel and Findley would have little time to “pot-hunt”

or prepare the daily skins.<sup>164</sup> Their time in the woods was too valuable. In a sense, this practice was ironic: Daniel’s search for the solitude of the West required a community of supporting woodsmen.

Daniel’s brother, Squire Boone is believed to have stayed on the Yadkin long enough to finish his family’s spring planting and caught the party’s tracks in late spring. Lyman Draper contended that the party’s late departure date of May accounted for Squire’s farming needs, although Peter Houston claimed Squire joined the band in late fall after the harvest was complete.<sup>165</sup> In either case, Daniel’s soul was set on the horizon. Some scholars depict this exodus as a mere hunting trip. Others write that it was a quest for adventure. Some even portray it as a business initiative, due to hard economic times in Northern Carolina. Although such motives may have formed the company’s superficial drive, for Daniel, the Western excursion was undeniably an outlet for his restless, curious, and famished soul; it was the fulfillment of his destiny.

Their first task was to scale the mountain chain from Elk Creek to the Blue Ridge and then reach the Three Forks of the New River. Once accomplished the men had to exact their compass to a place dubbed *The Stairs*, a small and particular mountain pass within the greater Stone Mountains. Moving due west, the woodsmen would have invariably struck *The Hunters’ Trail*, which led straight for the Cumberland Mountains. Although the trek was incredibly arduous, already hundreds of miles in linear distance through dense forests and high mountains, the men were constant and tirelessly looked straight ahead for the great *Warriors’ Path*. With Daniel as their guide, Kentucky was as good as theirs if they could but find it.

<sup>160</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 207.

<sup>161</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 207.

<sup>162</sup> Jackson Independent Patriot, Nov. 8, 1826, pg. 1, col. 1

<sup>163</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 48; Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 207.

<sup>164</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 48.

<sup>165</sup> Houston, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Daniel Boone*. 1.

In short time, perhaps driven by Providence, immense skill, or both, Daniel found it with ease. The party navigated the trace and soon laid eyes upon the legendary gap in the mountains—the hailed white gates of heaven. Robert Morgan captured this moment, writing that the Cumberland Gap shone as “sharp as a gunsight cut into the mountains.”<sup>166</sup> After victoriously crossing through the cut, as though down a Triumph of ancient Rome, the band shifted north and passed through Pine Mountain Gap. After crossing the Cumberland River and the Sand Gap—later known as Boone’s Gap—the party settled and established Station Camp—near modern day Irvine, Kentucky.

Daniel appeared to have had little interest in the camp, however. He was eager to ascertain the position of Findley’s fabled paradise. Like Thomas of the Bible who needed to see the holes of the nails, Daniel needed proof. Alone, he shouldered his rifle and concentrated his gaze toward the waters of the Rockcastle and Kentucky Rivers and climbed the neighboring small mountain—or knob—to gather his position. Upon reaching its commanding height, “towards the time of the setting sun,” his heart became light and his soul weightless.<sup>167</sup> Stretching out as far as his eyes could see was the marvelous fact of the true “garden spot of the west.”<sup>168</sup> It was his *Kanta-ke*. In his April, 1845 edition of *The Southern Magazine*, Simms proclaimed the sublimity and perfection of this moment, writing that Daniel

felt very much as Columbus did, gazing from his caravel on San Salvador; as Cortes, looking down from the crest of Ahualco, on the valley of Mexico; or Vasco Nunez, standing alone on the peak of Darien,

and stretching his eyes over the hitherto undiscovered waters of the Pacific.<sup>169</sup>

In his 1812 *Memorial to the Kentucky Legislature*, Daniel himself wrote that, as he stood alone atop the knob, “which overlooks this terrestrial paradise,” he gazed upon “those fertile plains which are unequaled on our earth, and laid the fairest claim to the description of the garden of God.”<sup>170</sup> He had wandered in the wilderness for thirty-five years. Now, standing atop the metaphorical Mount Pisgah, Canaan—the land “flowing with milk and honey”—shone brightly before him. Descending, Daniel entered the Promised Land.

### **Conclusion**

Lyman Draper's exhaustive history described Daniel Boone as a “true philosopher.”<sup>171</sup> Draper did not mean philosopher in the general sense, however, for Daniel cared little for the wandering thoughts of men. As the Frenchmen Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in Book Two of his work, *Democracy in America*, “Americans have no philosophical school of their own.” Tocqueville’s argument is undeniably sound, as America’s greatest philosophers—thinkers—were not philosophers at all. Rather, it appears the ranks of American philosophy have always been disguised by storytellers. Take for instance the works of Mark Twain. In his “Notice” prefacing his great narrative, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Twain warned the reader about taking his work too seriously.

Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted;

---

<sup>166</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 96.

<sup>167</sup> Peck, “Life of Daniel Boone.” 11.

<sup>168</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 211.

---

<sup>169</sup> Simm’s *Southern Magazine*, April 185; also, Simm’s *Views and Records*

<sup>170</sup> Boone, Daniel. *Memorial to the Kentucky Legislature*. 1812.

<sup>171</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 215.

persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot. *By Order of the Author.*

Hidden within Twain's narrative, however, is his subtle critique of American society, culture, and democracy. His main character bears the name analogous to an insignificant or unimportant person—Huckleberry. In his eulogy of Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson declared,

Had his genius been only contemplative, he had been fitted to his life, but with his energy and practical ability he seemed born for great enterprise and for command; and I so much regret the loss of his rare powers of action, that I cannot help counting it a fault in him that he had no ambition. Wanting this, instead of engineering for all America, he was the captain of a *huckleberry* party. Pounding beans is good to the end of pounding empires one of these days; but if, at the end of years, it is still only beans!

Twain transported his American philosophy on the insignificant back of societies most unimportant figure—Huckleberry Finn. Perhaps, Twain's irony is his secret: American philosophy is antithetical to the philosophy of aristocracy and produced not by leisure, as is the case in Europe, but a daily and unique observation and application of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. In Huck's case, the common and the simple. Tocqueville observed a similar maxim,

...if I seek amongst these characteristics that which predominates over and includes almost all the rest, I discover that in most of the operations of the mind, each American appeals to the individual exercise of

his own understanding alone. America is therefore one of the countries in the world where philosophy is least studied, and where the precepts of Descartes are best applied.

It is quite possible that Daniel Boone never heard of René Descartes, read his *Principia Philosophiae*, or understood his axiom: *Cogito ergo sum*—translated, “I think, therefore I am.” But Daniel Boone, like Mark Twain, was a storyteller. His story, however distinct from the jocular narratives of Twain, was nevertheless imbued with subtle critiques of culture and society. Although not written in words, Daniel's story was a work of philosophical art, for it was dictated by his curious life and transcribed by his rugged destiny. It was driven by flora and fauna and impressed upon Daniel's soul a very natural philosophy—a First Philosophy and, perhaps, a social philosophy—that was distinguished by one's observations within the purity and sublimity of nature.

Daniel witnessed with supreme pleasure the pulse of the western wind, the enigmatic voice of the woods, the sagacity of the tree, the tranquil naivety of the animal, the euphony of the birds. He wrote of his great delights in surveying the fertile valleys and commanding ridges of his *Kanta-ke*. Robert Morgan asserted that Daniel saw “nature as both a fact and a fable, and every cloud and sunset, tree and blade of grass, as instance of both the real and the ideal, physical and spiritual.”<sup>172</sup> Daniel's philosophic sense of the spiritual was unique among his white contemporaries. Morgan continued, “Every tree and river, rock and cloud, was alive, haunted, significant.”<sup>173</sup> Early Boone historian John Mason Peck wrote that Daniel early “acquired the habit of contemplation, and was an enthusiastic admirer of nature in its

---

<sup>172</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 118.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

primeval wildness.”<sup>174</sup> He was the first-man of his age: an artist and a hunter; a poet and a pathfinder; a storyteller and a woodsman. He both defined and exemplified the notion of an “American Adam,” the idea that, in America, man was reborn. This new understanding of man resulted because America was both the land of “thought and action” and of “reflection and choice.”<sup>175</sup> It was the old realities of the east mixed with the forcefully intimate and new realities of the American wilderness and its unique vices.

Daniel’s thoughts and actions during his own lifetime, let alone those chronicled by the centuries, stirred a peculiar drive in man to crave an ideal nature—an ideal soul. Morgan wrote that such inspiration was because of Daniel’s:

Quaker tolerance for others, reliant and integrious, with a large capacity to wonder and reaching out toward the new and mysterious, brave but cautious, sociable, diplomatic, calm in the face of danger.<sup>176</sup>

Lyman Draper asserted a similar maxim:

“He follow[ed] the Ohio—*la Belle Riviere* of the French—in all its silent wanderings—how he sits and studies the huge mountains as they cap their venerable brows with clouds.”<sup>177</sup>

Such still meditation and deep observation depict in Daniel a soul of great moral virtue and natural philosophy. He was more than a hunter and adventurer, and more, perhaps, than a discoverer of ancient lands. He has been described as a poet, an artist of the

forest, always seeking to understand the secrets beyond the next bluff. Most importantly, however, Daniel Boone was woodsman-philosopher.

Robert Morgan noted, “[Daniel] felt an ancient kinship with the forest.”<sup>178</sup> Not only could he navigate the woods with extreme ease, he was connected to it. Daniel appeared to feel its great pulse and understand its hushed song. He was one to walk into the morning meadow and hear the silence as it sang.<sup>179</sup> He hungered for its communion. Lyman Draper wrote, “No man ever possessed in a more happy combination than Daniel Boone those quiet, taciturn habits, love of solitary adventure, and admiration for the silent charms of nature.”<sup>180</sup> He concluded that, as “new groves and woods and hills and plains salute[d] his vision with each returning dawn,” the soul of Daniel Boone was wonderfully nourished by the “perfectly delicious” and sublime frontier.<sup>181</sup>

His soul was also joyous under its wondrous canopy. Legend has it that in 1770 a group of hunters ventured into Kentucky. They were led by Kaspar Mansker, the first true European longhunter in the American West. As he silently crept amidst Kentucky’s dark night, a faint song pierced the darkness. With his musket loaded and primed Mansker slowly approached fearing the worst: perhaps they had stumbled upon a Cherokee war party. To his great surprise, what Kaspar saw was a man, “flat upon his back, and singing at the top of his voice.”<sup>182</sup> His bed was deerskin and his entertainment the night sky. He was Daniel Boone.

An early dispatch from Fort Osage, reprinted in *Niles’ Register* in 1816, asserted that Daniel, who “might have accumulated

<sup>174</sup> Peck, “Life of Daniel Boone.” 7.

<sup>175</sup> The former is derived from Winston Churchill’s *My Early Life*, and the latter from Alexander Hamilton’s *The Federalist No. One*.

<sup>176</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 118.

<sup>177</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 240.

<sup>178</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 79.

<sup>179</sup> This phrase is taken from *I Won’t Be Found*, by the Tallest Man on Earth.

<sup>180</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 229.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>182</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 85.

riches as readily as any man in Kentucky,” preferred “the woods, where you see him in the dress of the roughest, poorest hunter.”<sup>183</sup> Although Ralph Waldo Emerson was yet to be born, the life of Daniel Boone echoed his thoughts.

The sun illuminates only the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are still truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood. His intercourse with heaven and earth becomes part of his daily food. In the presence of nature a wild delight runs through the man, in spite of real sorrows.<sup>184</sup>

As though the mind of Emerson and the life of Boone transcended time, Daniel would write of his time alone in Kentucky, “I was surrounded by plenty in the midst of want; I was happy in the midst of dangers and inconveniences. In such a diversity, it was impossible I should be disposed to melancholy.” Daniel’s 1775 wilderness companion Felix Walker summed up both his and Daniel’s romantic perception of the pure west, writing:

Nothing can furnish the contemplative mind with more sublime reflections, than nature unbroken by art; we can there trace the wisdom of the Great Architect in the construction of his work in nature’s simplicity, which, when he had finished, he pronounced all good.<sup>185</sup>

Daniel’s “wild delight” in nature was never tainted by “sorrows” or “dangers.” Like Emerson, Daniel fervently sought to “interrogate the great apparition that shines so peacefully around” him and zealously inquired “to what end is nature?” Like Emerson, Daniel was captivated by the true “City of God”—the “heavenly bodies” (stars)—as “one might think the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime.” Like Emerson, Daniel understood that nature “reflect[s] the wisdom of his best hour” as it “delight[s]” in the “simplicity of his childhood.”<sup>186</sup> In the woods, Daniel was a philosopher; under its canopy, he was a child.

Robert Morgan later noted:

[Henry David Thoreau’s] observation, knowledge, wisdom, integrity, artistry, and stubbornness remain unsurpassed in American literature and culture. And more than any other single author Thoreau expresses much that was likely the experience and aspiration and genius of Boone.<sup>187</sup>

Morgan concluded, “Thoreau put into sentences the poetry and thought Boone had lived.”<sup>188</sup> Like Daniel, Thoreau and Emerson believed that the “future lies [in the West].” In such a vast wilderness—for that is what Thoreau meant by “west”—humanity would find “preservation.”<sup>189</sup> But it was Daniel Boone that actually “walked” west.

Daniel Boone’s natural philosophy nurtured problematic results, however. The

<sup>183</sup> Niles’ Register, X, 361 (June 15, 1816).

<sup>184</sup> Emerson, Ralph Waldo. “Nature” in *Selected Essays, Lectures, and Poems*. Robert D. Richardson Jr., ed. New York: Bantam Dell, 1990. 18.

<sup>185</sup> Walker, Felix. *Felix Walker’s Narrative of His Trip with Boone from Long Island to*

*Boonesborough in March 1775*. Debow’s Review of February, 1854. 4.

<sup>186</sup> Emerson, *Selections*. 17.

<sup>187</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. xviii.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, xviii.

<sup>189</sup> Walden, Chapter 1, *Writings*, Riverside edition, 11 vols. (Boston, 1893-1894), II, 21-23, 25-28.

further his love of raw, untouched, and uncultivated nature drove his exploration the more open and visible the western path became. Although Daniel held nature as “a series of wonders, and a fund of delight,” his presence therein appeared to reduce its awe and bankrupt its sublimity, for his path would forever be connected with empire. The histories written of Daniel Boone throughout the mid-to-late nineteenth century embrace him as their archetypal pioneer-hero. According to historian James K. Folsom, these writers paint their myth-heroes according to the problematic canvas of western-ism, meaning the “desirability of the West as a place to live absolutely in terms of the idea of progress.” Folsom continued,

“To [them], life in the West becomes more desirable as conditions in the West itself approach conditions in the East; and [their] hope for the future of the West is that it will someday equal, or indeed surpass, the East in strictly Eastern value of civilized comfort.”<sup>190</sup>

In the opening lines of his 1856 biography *Daniel Boone and the Hunters of Kentucky*, William Henry Bogart declared, “If it be fame, that in the progress of a great empire, one name above all others be associated with its deliverance from the dominion of the savage...then this inheritance is that of the subject of this memoir—Daniel Boone.”<sup>191</sup> Bogart concluded that it was Boone’s providential destiny “to lead a nation”—eastern civilization—“to its place of power.” Moreover, Timothy Flint’s 1833 *Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone* painted Boone as civilization’s godfather and “a willing servant of society, proud of

his role as pathfinder for the more sophisticated social order which will follow him.”<sup>192</sup> Although a lover of the pure wilderness, Daniel is remembered as its greatest conqueror.

Famously, Frederick Jackson Turner would write in the late nineteenth century that Boone’s discovery of the Cumberland Gap—really, his popularization of the great V-Shaped notch—paved wide a gateway for the east to expire the primordial west. He believed that Daniel Boone “epitomize[d]...advance across the continent.”<sup>193</sup> “Stand at Cumberland Gap,” Turner wrote, “and watch the procession of civilization, marching single file—the buffalo following the trail to the salt springs, the Indian, the fur-trader and hunter, the cattle-raiser, the farmer—and the frontier has passed by.”<sup>194</sup>

Turner’s presentation of Boone as civilization’s pathfinder and way-maker was not unique among nineteenth century cultural or political critiques. Fifty years before Turner’s thesis, Missouri artist George C. Bingham painted his most famous work: *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through the Cumberland Gap*. Its title says it all. With his ancient Greek archaic smile, Boone leads a band of settlers—families—through the great Gap. He holds the reigns of a white horse, on top of which sits a woman. She is clad in a simple shall and rides sidesaddle. She is civilization and Boone is leading the way. In his book, *The Columbus of the Woods: Daniel Boone and the Typology of Manifest Destiny*, art historian J. Gray Sweeney equated Boone with the Biblical Moses. In his discussion of Bingham’s work, Sweeney declared, “[Bingham’s] picture defined for the period the typology of westward migration.”<sup>195</sup>

---

<sup>192</sup> Flint, *Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone*. 13.

<sup>193</sup> Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. 10.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>195</sup> Sweeney, J. Gray. *The Columbus of the Woods: Daniel Boone and the Typology of Manifest*

---

<sup>190</sup> Flint, *Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone*. 10.

<sup>191</sup> Bogart, William Henry. *Daniel Boone and the Hunters of Kentucky*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1875. 13.

The eighth canto of *Don Juan* presents a different image of our woodsman, however. Lord Byron suspended his discussion of the siege of Ismail to discuss Daniel Boone, the “back-woodsman of Kentucky.”<sup>196</sup> Byron described Boone as an altruistic and simple man. Most importantly, however, Byron’s depiction painted the old woodsman as a “child of Nature,”<sup>197</sup> whose “virtues shames the corruptions of civilization,” writes Henry Nash Smith.<sup>198</sup> Byron wrote:

For killing nothing but a bear or buck, he  
Enjoy'd the lonely, vigorous, harmless  
    days  
Of his old age in wilds of deepest maze.

Byron continued:

The inconvenience of civilization  
Is, that you neither can be pleased nor  
    please;  
But where he met the individual man,  
He show'd himself as kind as mortal can.  
...  
The free-born forest found and kept  
    [him] free,  
And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

The paradox is this: although the “free-born forest” pleased Daniel, its purity, simplicity, and sublimity steadily diminished as his adventure under its beautiful canopy increased.

Daniel Boone was not alone, however. Nineteenth century poet and journalist Walt Whitman also struggled with this paradox and clash between civilization and savagery; between cultivated man and primitive nature. Whitman’s poetry is imbued with both a particular adoration for nature’s cultivation and a peculiar longing for the

perpetuation of the rawness of its pure sublimity. Whitman believed that, as the budding American Republic grew, so must it distance itself from its “feudal past of Europe” and build its foundation upon the order of nature.<sup>199</sup> In his *Poems of the Sayers of the Words of the Earth*, Whitman wrote,

I swear there is no greatness or  
power that does not emulate those of  
the earth! I swear there can be no  
theory of any account, unless it  
corroborates the theory of the earth!  
No politics, art, religion, behavior, or  
what not, is of account, unless it  
compares with the amplitude of the  
earth, unless it face the exactness,  
vitality, impartiality, rectitude of the  
earth.<sup>200</sup>

Whitman’s flight from feudalism found its home in America’s true West. He believed that America’s political foundation must rest on the “exactness, vitality, impartiality...and rectitude” of nature. Perhaps Whitman saw America’s eastern seaboard as a luminous shadow of her European and cultivated past, or maybe he was captivated by the beauty and vigor of the West.

In either scenario, Whitman appears to understand the future of true American society as resting in America’s unconquered and untainted West. He concluded his most celebrated poem, *Pioneers! O Pioneers*, praising the westward army of frontiersman:

Till with sound of trumpet,  
Far, far off the day-break call—hark!  
How loud and clear it hear it wind;  
Swift! To the head of the army!—swift!

*Destiny*. St. Louis: The Washington University Gallery of Art, 1992. 41.

<sup>196</sup> *Don Juan*, Canto 8.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>198</sup> Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as a Symbol and Myth*. 55.

<sup>199</sup> Ward, John William. *Andrew Jackson—Symbol for an Age*. London: Oxford University Press, 1953. page 44.

<sup>200</sup> Whitman, Walt. “Poem of the Sayers of the Words of the Earth,” *Leaves of Grass*. (New York, 1856). p. 329.



Spring to your places, Pioneers! O  
pioneers.<sup>201</sup>

By describing the rugged frontiersman as a member of an army, with trumpets that take the wind and swift movements that bring order to the unordered, Whitman portrayed westward movement as paradoxical: it is natural, as the children of Adam have drifted westward through history, but it is forced, as though the savage and untouched wilderness required the conquering and subduing of an army.

In Whitman's *Song of Myself*, which has been described as a true representation of "the core of [his] poetic vision,"<sup>202</sup> however, his words take on a new tone.

The friendly and flowing savage, who is  
he?  
Is he waiting for civilization, or past it  
and mastering it?  
Is he some Southwesterner rais'd out-  
doors? is he Kanadian?  
Is he from the Mississippi country?  
Iowa, Oregon, California?  
The mountains? prairie-life, bush-life?  
or sailor from the sea?

Wherever he goes men and women  
accept and desire him,  
They desire he should like them, touch  
them, speak to them, stay with them.  
Behavior lawless as snow-flakes, words  
simple as grass, uncomb'd head,  
laughter, and naiveté,  
Slow-stepping feet, common features,  
common modes and emanations,  
They descend in new forms from the tips  
of his fingers,  
They are wafted with the odor of his  
body or breath, they fly out of the  
glance of his eyes.

Whitman praised him who is beyond civili-  
zation, whose society is that of the snow-  
flake and language that of nature. He exem-  
plified the ideal American man as not some-  
one who is adverse to law and language, but  
a people who have developed a higher form  
of such logic and reason: nature. In concor-  
dance with this view, Whitman wrote:

I hear you whispering there O stars of  
heaven,  
O suns—O grass of graves—O perpetual  
transfers and promotions,  
If you do not say any thing how can I  
say any thing?<sup>203</sup>

Whitman makes clear his belief that the  
voice of nature supplies the power of  
thought to mankind. But, in Whitman's own  
thoughts, the paradox and question of the  
early American West is encumbered by his  
vision of a frontier army. Was the West a  
land to be conquered by the strength and  
resolve of a pioneer army? Or was it a pure  
and already perfected land to be left alone?  
Whitman's poetry appears insufficient for  
the task, as he leaves this question entirely  
unanswered, and maybe for good reason.

But the tough question remains: how  
did Daniel Boone understand himself and  
his role in civilization's wooded periphery?  
It would be natural for the founder of the  
western path to be proud of his achievement,  
to look behind him and find the steady  
advance of a prospering civilization follow-  
ing his footprints. In Daniel Boone's case,  
this was not so. An anonymous kinsman  
wrote, "like the unrefined Savage," Daniel  
"certainly prefere[d] a state of nature to a  
state of Civilization, if he were obliged to be  
confined to one or the other."<sup>204</sup> Just as  
Daniel's soul longed for an intimate com-  
munion with the forest, his person as an  
individual in human society desired a cozy

<sup>201</sup> Whitman, Walt. Pioneers! O Pioneers! Stanza 26

<sup>202</sup> Greenspan, Ezra, ed. *Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself": A Sourcebook and Critical Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2005. Print.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., Stanza 49.

<sup>204</sup> Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as a Symbol and Myth*. 55.

connection with his surroundings. Henry Nash Smith dubbed orderly human civilization—the east—as “pernicious...because it interposes a veil of artificiality between the individual and the natural objects of experience.” Smith equated the “sophisticated art” of civilization as the unnatural substitute for the “realities of things.”<sup>205</sup> Thomas J. Farnham, an early nineteenth century explorer and writer, wrote that, while some boast of civilization’s triumph, others scorn the aid of science and “look through Nature, without the aid of science, up to its causes.”<sup>206</sup> Daniel Boone appears to be such a man.

After his 1818 interview with the aged woodsman, John Mason Peck wrote that “[Daniel Boone’s] most prominent traits of his character were unshaken fortitude and self-command.” After sitting in the woodsman’s home, conversing with him for many hours, Peck traveled back east to write his book. When Peck originally began his journey west he intended to find a strong-willed hunter-hero. Instead, he found a man imbued with a love of nature, its solitude and all of its wondrous glories—he found a philosopher in the woods. Peck wrote that Daniel, being “accustomed to be much alone in the woods,” developed “the habit of contemplation and was an enthusiastic admirer of nature in its primeval wilderness.”<sup>207</sup> He continued, “throughout his whole life,” Daniel felt a strong “repugnance to the technical forms of law, and the conventional regulations of society and of governments.”<sup>208</sup> Nineteenth century biographer William H. Bogart agreed. “All [Daniel’s] ...history shows that he had no attachment

for the perpetual society of humanity.”<sup>209</sup> If given his druthers, it appears that Daniel would have answered: his love lay in the primordial west and his passion to lie under its sublime canopy on his deerskins and sing.

In his 1846 editions of the *North American Review*, James H. Perkins portrayed Daniel as a “white Indian,” who ventured into the wilderness not to find wealth or fame, but because of “a love of nature, of perfect freedom, and of the adventurous life in the woods.” Perkins continued,

[Daniel Boone] would have pined and died as a nabob in the midst of civilization. He wanted a frontier, and the perils and pleasures of a frontier life, not wealth; and he was happier in his log-cabin, with a loin of venison and his ramrod for a spit, than he would have been amid the greatest profusion of modern luxuries.”<sup>210</sup>

In a 1796 letter to Governor Isaac Shelby—the first governor of the State of Kentucky and previous surveyor of Boonesborough in 1775-1776—Daniel himself remarked, “I am no Statesman I am a Woodsman.”<sup>211</sup> Although he opened the West to the common man and, although he would be forever depicted as the great American pioneer, Daniel Boone was a highly simplistic, soli-tude-loving woodsman-philosopher, driven forever to marvel at the setting sun and uncover the mysteries laying beyond the next ridge.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>206</sup> Thomas J. Farnham, *Travels in the Great Western Prairies, the Anahuac and Rocky Mountains, and in the Oregon Territory* (Poughkeepsie, N. Y., 1841), p. 72.

<sup>207</sup> Peck, “Life of Daniel Boone.” 7.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>209</sup> Bogart, William Henry. *Daniel Boone and the Hunters of Kentucky*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1875. 32.

<sup>210</sup> Perkins, James H. *North American Review*, LXII, 97, 86-87. (January, 1846).

<sup>211</sup> Collins, Lewis. *History of Kentucky*, 1877. vol ii, p. 242.

## CHAPTER FOUR Of Civilizations and Horizons

“Perhaps you think the Creator sent you here to dispose of us as you see fit. If I thought you were sent by the Creator, I might be induced to think you had a right to dispose of me. Do not misunderstand me, but understand fully with reference to my affection for the land. I never said the land was mine to do with as I choose. The one who has a right to dispose of it is the one who has created it. I claim a right to live on my land and accord you the privilege to return to yours.”

—Hinmatóowyahtq̓it, Chief of the  
Wallamwatkain Band of the Nez Perce

### Introduction

The American frontier *was* a land of rivers and mountains—of infinite horizons. Pulitzer-Prize winner, Kiowa writer, and poet N. Scott Momaday described it as a “land of sacred realities—powerful things.” He continued, “It’s a landscape that has to be seen to be believed and I say on an occasion it may have to be believed to be seen.” Most importantly, it *was* a powerful reality, for it possessed a seemingly endless power to attract and to define, to seize and to liberate. The American frontier of our story *is* the contested periphery of Anglo-Native settlement. This living topography was the meeting ground of Western Civilization and the true west—where the backcountry collided with Indian country. Such a collision transfigured white and red into an undistinguishable but natural image.

In his 1947 environmental and geographical survey of the native cultures of North America, Alfred Louis Kroeber described the Native of the eighteenth-century frontier as “a new, assimilated, hybrid-Caucasian culture.” In turn, the American pioneers of the day were often branded as

hybrid-Indians.<sup>212</sup> The more intense the collision, the less distinguishable each culture became. Historian R. Davis Edmunds concluded that, by 1800, “the Shawnee way of life represented a combination of aboriginal and European cultures.”<sup>213</sup> Late eighteenth century Presbyterian minister David McClure’s observations concurred, writing, “At the aptly named Newcomer’s Town in 1772,” he “found traditional bark long-houses adjacent to backcountry-style log cabins.” The Delaware prophet Neolin’s home stands as a great example. McClure observed that, although a prophet of times past, Neolin’s home had a “stone cellar, staircase, stone chimney, fireplace, closets, and apartments (rooms)” that all reminded him of “an English dwelling.”<sup>214</sup> It is clear that, as the Native’s dependence on the outside world increased, so also their amazing cultural uniqueness proportionally receded into the lost periphery of history. Richard Slotkin argued that the evolution of American Western mythology was the evolution of the American mind’s “too-slow awakening to the significance of the American Indian in the universal scheme of things generally and in our American world in particular.”<sup>215</sup> Therefore, to understand Daniel Boone’s thoughts of—and actions within—the natural and culturally mixed world of the American West, we must first understand the collision and its resulting turbulence.

---

<sup>212</sup> Kroeber, Alfred Louis. *Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America*, Volume 38, page 90.

<sup>213</sup> Edmunds, R. David. *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership*. 2nd Edition, Mark C Carnes, ed., New York: Person Longman, 2007. 57.

<sup>214</sup> Franklin B. Dexter, ed., *Diary of David McClure, Doctor of Divinity, 1748-1820* (New York, 1899), 68.

<sup>215</sup> Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. 17.

### *On Natural Civilization*

Archaeological evidence suggests the “continual presence” of Native Americans on the south side of the Ohio River for “ten thousand years prior to the arrival of Europeans.”<sup>216</sup> When the first white explorers entered the fertile river valley, the number and magnitude of monumental earthworks lining the riverbanks perplexed them. Southwest of the valley they unearthed mummified human remains and uncovered many other artifacts of prehistoric life. They found evidence of aged and ordered civilizations; evidence of communities, organized religion, and political life. The valley’s Late Prehistoric Period (1000 AD – 1650 AD) was a time of change and solidification, witnessing great modifications in “subsistence, settlement, and social structure.”<sup>217</sup> In his archaeological survey of the Ohio country, Bradley Lepper wrote that the changes in the Late Prehistoric Period included:

A shift to larger and more permanent villages, changes in the form and construction of ceramic vessels, changing ritual practices, increasing evidence for institutionalized leaders, and a dramatic increase in the use of maize as a staple food.<sup>218</sup>

Maize—or Indian corn—was developed; peoples settled and began dwelling in established villages; egalitarian tribes cemented into organized and hierarchal political bodies. This period was also categorized as a

time of peace and improvement. In Query XI of his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Thomas Jefferson documented his own excavations of an Indian “barrow”—or gravesite. Finding what he believed to be over one thousand skeletons, Jefferson discovered no battle wounds or “holes” in any of them.<sup>219</sup> Modern archaeological records of the Hamilton County State Line Site concur with Jefferson’s two-century-old observations, discovering “projectile points embedded in only three of 390 burials.”<sup>220</sup>

The civilizations of the Late Prehistoric Period are classified today as the “Fort Ancient” and “Mississippian” cultures. In her 1998 report, titled *The Archaeological Reconnaissance of Ohio River Island National Wildlife Refuge*, Melissa Diamanti concluded:

The Fort Ancient and Mississippian cultural sequence can be described as a period of Mesoamerican-influenced cultural complexity built on a very effective subsistence base. Cahokia, a Mississippian center in Illinois, controlled a sphere of influence that extended into the middle Ohio River Valley.<sup>221</sup>

Both cultures built “hilltop forts accompanied by plaza complexes,” wrote Diamanti. There were ascribed tombs and sophisticated burial places as well as shell-tempered pottery. This ceramic art differentiated the many tribes and expressed a sense of ethnic

---

<sup>216</sup> Aaron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. 6.

<sup>217</sup> Robert A Genheimer, ed., “Cultures Before Contact: The Late Prehistory of Ohio and Surrounding Regions” in *Ohio Archaeological Council*, 2000.

<sup>218</sup> Lepper, T. Bradley. *Ohio Archeology: An Illustrated Chronicle of Ohio’s Ancient American Indian Cultures*. Wilmington: Orange Frazer Press, 2005. 195.

<sup>219</sup> Jefferson, Thomas. “Query XI” in *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*. Merrill Peterson, ed., New York: Penguin Books, 1977, 141.

<sup>220</sup> Lepper, *Ohio Archeology: An Illustrated Chronicle of Ohio’s Ancient American Indian Cultures*. 203.

<sup>221</sup> Diamanti, Melissa 1998. *Archaeological Reconnaissance of Ohio River Island National Wildlife Refuge in Pennsylvania, West Virginian and Kentucky and Phase I Archaeological Survey of Manchester Island No. 2, Kentucky*. Report submitted to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 5, Hadley, Ma.

unity and identity. It was “decorated with a variety of regionally-distinctive incised and stamped patterns.”<sup>222</sup> Diamanti discovered the peculiar pottery technique that employed riverine agents and local additives to prohibit shrinking and splitting in the firing process such as ground mussel shells or potsherds.<sup>223</sup>

Most all Fort Ancient sites’ archaeological excavations uncovered stockades and a geometric town structure and housing pattern centered around the pivotal town courtyard.<sup>224</sup> Findings suggest that these towns, as well as their citizens, observed strict, community-centric planning and government. Ohio’s SunWatch village is a prime example. Modern archaeological evidence suggests an agricultural and economic application to the greatly mysterious pole system bordering the central ceremonial area of the town. This concentric pattern—closely related in appearance, although not in magnitude to the English monolithic structure of *Stonehenge*—was discovered to be a giant sun calendar, marking the planting and harvesting days of each year.<sup>225</sup> Lepper concluded:

Late Prehistoric villages were like almost any small community of farmers: everyone worked. The men likely cleared the fields and hunted game. The woman probably did the planting, weeding, harvesting, and grinding of the corn, while the child-

ren helped out and also watched the fields to keep of marauding crows and deer.<sup>226</sup>

By the end of the fifteenth century, the cultural evolution of the Late Prehistoric Period culminated in many sedentary, permanent, and thriving settlements within the great Ohio River Valley.<sup>227</sup> They were a prehistoric people but not uncivilized; they were primordial yet dynamic. Most importantly, they were a people developed by the millenniums yet not a part of the millennium’s developments; a natural people viewed as entirely unnatural on earth.

By the sixteenth century, modernity’s incursion forever halted the civilizing evolutions of America’s native cultures. Such invaders were cloaked as European explorers, settlers, and Christians. Native cultures had developed in an ancient vacuum and in a particular ecological niche. Once their precious and brittle conditions were disturbed, so also their progress fragmented. It is popularly concluded, moreover, that even before direct contact, the European presence on the periphery unbalanced the ecological, geographical, and political systems that developed quietly over the millenniums. Stephen Aaron concluded that the depopulation of the Ohio Country began long before “Daniel Boone or any other Anglo-American hunters crossed the Appalachians.”<sup>228</sup>

The Fur Trade Wars—also called the Beaver or Iroquois Wars (1630 AD – 1680 AD)—exemplify this causal relationship of indirect unbalance. Before their New World contact, most European markets imported

---

<sup>222</sup> Lepper, *Ohio Archeology: An Illustrated Chronicle of Ohio’s Ancient American Indian Cultures*. 198.

<sup>223</sup> “Museum of Native American Artifacts-MISSISSIPPIAN PERIOD 900 AD - 1450 AD”. Retrieved 2010-07-18.

<sup>224</sup> Diamanti, *Archaeological Reconnaissance of Ohio River Island National Wildlife Refuge in Pennsylvania, West Virginian and Kentucky and Phase I Archaeological Survey of Manchester Island No. 2, Kentucky*.

<sup>225</sup> Lepper, *Ohio Archeology: An Illustrated Chronicle of Ohio’s Ancient American Indian Cultures*. 209.

---

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 203.

<sup>227</sup> Johnson, W.C. 1981. *The Campbell Farm Site (36FA26) and Monongahela: A Preliminary Examination and Assessment*. Paper presented at the Fourth Monongahela Symposium, State College, Pennsylvania.

<sup>228</sup> Aaron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. 7.

their furs from northern regions such as Scandinavia or Russia. The mid-sixteenth century saw the influx of New World goods, however, and the hungry European markets tasted the opulent, less-expensive, and higher quality American furs. Years before permanent European settlement, such furs were obtained from Basque—or Western Pyrenees—fishermen off of Newfoundland’s Grand Banks and around the St. Lawrence River’s estuary. The principle fur traded was the American beaver due to its longevity, warmth, and luxurious texture. As European interest in such furs increased, so also increased the local American tribes’ desire for economic supremacy. A monopoly on the fur trade would not only supply advantageous funds to the economy of the tribe but also concrete its standing as the most powerful among the many surrounding nations.

The Iroquois Nation—formed in about 1575 in central New York—greatly desired such a position. Known as the League of Five Nations, comprised of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Tuscarora, and Seneca Tribes, the Iroquois numbered between twenty and thirty thousand. Their adept warriors traded their bounties of beavers for wool blankets, European muskets, iron tools, shirts, and ornamental beads. Early Ohio historian R. Douglas Hurt commented in his book, *The Ohio Frontier*, “Quickly, beaver became the first cash crop of North America and beaver skins the monetary medium of change.”<sup>229</sup> By the mid century, however, over trapping plagued the Native’s commerce and their insatiable European wants plagued their powerful position. By the late 1640s, most fur-bearing animals—especially the beaver—were nearly extinct in the Iroquois

homeland.<sup>230</sup> Additionally, their interaction with European genomes and technology witnessed the devastating reduction of their populace. Endemic diseases pervaded their ranks and inoculable warfare plagued their tribes.

To satisfy their voracious desires and repopulate their ranks, due to the “demographic and economic factors, closely tied to European colonialism,” the Iroquois set their eyes on the rich hunting ground of the Ohio Country.<sup>231</sup> Pressured by their own undoing, their quest for control is known today as one of the bloodiest conflicts in North American history. The Iroquois—the Mohawk in particular—speedily destroyed many tribal confederacies of the Ohio Country, including the Tobacco, Neutral, Erie, Attiwandaron, Huron, Susquehannock, and Shawnee Nations, in order to gain control of its fertile valleys.<sup>232</sup> By 1654, the Iroquois dominated the “Ontario Peninsula,” stretching from the Niagara River to the east of Lake Huron. Their ascendancy, however, came at a price. The Iroquois disrupted age-old tribal geography from Lake Champlain to the Mississippi River and eradicated all sedentary settlements in their wake. In particular, the Shawnee disseminated into splintered contingents that drifted to Alabama, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Pennsylvania.<sup>233</sup> The power struggle created by

<sup>229</sup> Hurt, R. Douglas. *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. 7.

<sup>230</sup> Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830*. 7.

<sup>231</sup> Aaron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. 7.

<sup>232</sup> Richter, Daniel K. *The Ordeal of the Long-House: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, 1992) 144-149; A. Gwynn Henderson, Cynthia E. Jobe, and Christopher A. Turnbow, *Indian Occupation and Use in Northern and Eastern Kentucky during the Contact Period (1540-1795): An Initial Investigation* (Frankfort, 1986).

<sup>233</sup> Callender, Charles, “Shawnee,” in Bruce G. Trigger, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, 20 vols. (Washington, D., 1978), 15:630-634.

European markets three thousand miles away indirectly raped the precious ecology of the Iroquois homeland and spread havoc across the Ohio Country, destroying its ten-thousand-year-old history before its veiled civilizations ever saw one white man. Perhaps, there is a natural clash between economics and nature, for the European notion of wealth—of labour and property—inculcated the natural notions of the Native with savage proclivities.

### *A Native History*

In his 1830s examination of the Amerindians, George Catlin wrote a two-volume treaty detailing his many years spent among the Natives. He observed:

The Indians of North America, as I have said before, are copper-coloured, with long black hair, black eyes, tall, straight, and elastic forms—are less than two millions in number—were originally the undisputed owners of the soil, and got their title to their lands from the Great Spirit who created them on it, were once a happy and flourishing people, enjoying all the comforts and luxuries of life which they knew of, and consequently cared for; were sixteen millions in numbers, and sent that number of daily prayers to the Almighty, and thanks for his goodness and protection.

Catlin continued:

Their country was entered by white men, but a few hundred years since; and thirty millions of these are now scuffling for the goods and luxuries of life, over the bones and ashes of twelve millions of red men; six millions of whom have fallen victims to the small-pox, and the remainder

to the sword, the bayonet, and whiskey; all of which means of their death and destruction have been introduced and visited upon them by acquisitive white men; and by when men, also, whose forefathers were welcomed and embraced in the land where the poor Indian met and fed them with ‘ears of green corn and with pemican.’<sup>234</sup>

Catlin emphasized both the genetic and physical results of European contact. Directly or indirectly, Native civilization’s progress perished under the biological and physical European gun. Although both routes led to the same end—near-complete devastation—individual analysis is required for each individual germ.

The “catastrophic” and inadvertent biological gun, wrote modern historian William McNeill in his 1976 book, *Plagues and Peoples*, resulted in one of the greatest “population decay[s]” of the modern era.<sup>235</sup> Modern scholarship surprisingly agrees with Catlin’s early nineteenth century “guess-timate.” It is believed that perhaps more than ten million people inhabited the region north of the Rio Grande by the turn of the sixteenth century—more than double the number that inhabited the British Isles during the same period.<sup>236</sup> Catlin’s observations, although racist in their own ways, speak to the truth behind the depopulation of Colonial America. Select modern estimates conclude that Native culture before contact could have exceeded seventy million people. In either case, David Cook of the University of Texas at Austin concluded that the

---

<sup>234</sup> Catlin, George, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973. 6.

<sup>235</sup> McNeill, William H, *Plagues and Peoples*. Garden City: Anchor Press, 1976.

<sup>236</sup> Lord, Lewis. “How Many People Were Here Before Columbus?” in *The U.S. News & World Report*, 1997, pp. 68-70.

depopulation of the Native peoples in the first century of their contact with European colonists was undeniably the “greatest human catastrophe in history, far exceeding even the disaster of the Black Death of medieval Europe.”<sup>237</sup> Native populations in some areas were reduced by 90 to 95 percent, losing millions to disease in only a few decades.<sup>238</sup> Entire towns witnessed the speedy decay of their populace, mothers burying their children one at a time. The most devastating diseases were smallpox, typhus, measles, influenza, bubonic plague, cholera, malaria, tuberculosis, mumps, yellow fever, and pertussis.<sup>239</sup>

The physical gun was no more obvious than its biological counterpart. Both European weaponry and their physical presence within the New World greatly disrupted the balance of the Old. Between the French’s initial permeation of the Ohio River Valley in the mid-to-late seventeenth century and John Findley’s entrance into its great southern valley a hundred years later, Native American’s habitual presence in the region was dismantled and their hamlets and villages almost entirely dissipated. The eastern bluegrass Chaouanon town of Eskippathiki serves as a great example. In a 1734 French census, the sedentary Shawnee settlement boasted 200 males. In Findley and Boone’s 1769 journey to the region—just 35 years later—the village was gone. In 1750, the Delaware chief “King Beaver” sensed the danger on the horizon and prophesied, “A high Wind is rising.” Little did he know the speeding validity of his divine foresight.

Interminable episodes of European pressure—such as the Fur Trade Wars—

continually pushed the Natives of the Ohio Country westward and forced them to adapt migratory and nomadic proclivities. The resulting bareness of their wake’s region was ironically complimented by its reputation as a supreme hunting ground, boasting garden-like abundance. One hundred years after the Fur Trade Wars, in 1750, Dr. Thomas Walker was sent by the Loyal Company of Virginia to observe and reconnoiter the western slopes of the Appalachians. Overwhelmed by his findings, he wrote in his journal, “We killed in the Journey 13 Buffaloes, 8 Elks, 53 Bear, 20 Deer, 4 Wild Geese, about 150 Turkeys, besides small game.” He continued, “We might have killed three times as much meat, if we had wanted it.”<sup>240</sup> Another hunter boasted the same luxuriance, “Turkeys so numerous it might be said they appeared but one flock, universally scattered in the woods.”<sup>241</sup> Absent from such records were any reports of civilizations or settled peoples.

Such rich accounts of wildlife do not account for the origin of this great hunting ground, nor do they tell of the Natives that once hunted and shaped the abundantly fruitful ecology. The Ohio Country of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was strategically hunted but not inhabited by particular groups of Native Americans. The absence of human permanence fostered a land rich in natural guilds and with great diversity; a land of supreme irony: one begging to be hunted and settled but filled by only hunter-gatherers. Stephen Aaron summarized such irony, writing, “Why Indians hunted but did not reside in the region puzzled European attestants, who knew little of the history and culture of the

<sup>237</sup> Cook, Noble David. *Born To Die*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; pp. 1-14.

<sup>238</sup> Miller, Randall M., Pencak, William A., eds. *Pennsylvania: A History of the Commonwealth*. Penn State University Press; 1 edition (October 22, 2002), 35.

<sup>239</sup> Aberth, John. *The First Horseman: Disease in Human History*. Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2007. 51.

<sup>240</sup> Johnson, J. Stoddard. ed., *First Explorations of Kentucky: Journals of Dr. Thomas Walker, 1750, and Christopher Gist, 1751* (Louisville, 1898), 75.

<sup>241</sup> Draper, Lyman. “Sketches from Border Life,” Draper MSS, 27CC33;



Indian peoples of the Ohio Valley.”<sup>242</sup> European presence dismantled century-old and settled communities, forming vacuums of regional power and geographic position.

Based on archaeological, historical, and anthropological evidence, it is clear that there was culture before contact.<sup>243</sup> However, the mind of man could only stretch so far as their eyes could see and the contact was all they saw. In their bloated and blind racist assumptions, European explorers dismissed the import of the Native cultures and their magnificent monuments, ascribing their constructions to one of the lost tribes of Israel, Greeks, Vikings, Hindus, or Phoenicians.<sup>244</sup> A prime example is found in Query XI of Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*, wherein Jefferson refused to acknowledge any Native monuments in America. He wrote, “I know of no such thing existing as an Indian monument,” and, he continued, “Of labour on the large scale, I think there is no remain as respectable as would be a common ditch for the draining of lands.”<sup>245</sup> In an anonymous 1775 letter to the *Royal American Magazine* of Boston, a prehistoric earthwork in the Ohio County was drawn and described. However, nowhere in its voluminous description of the mound’s great plan did the author attribute the local—savage—Native Americans as its civilized authors.<sup>246</sup> Although Native monuments were rivaled by those hailed in central and eastern Europe as “Wonders of the World,” their creators—the generations of

cultured individuals, engineers, and architects—have been forever discarded or labeled as savages, unfit and unequal. Lost, these civilizations perished without history and their people forgotten with only little remorse. Thomas Jefferson may have lamented the fact that “we have suffered so many of the Indian tribes already to extinguish” but it was only because he had not “previously collected...the rudiments at least” of their languages.<sup>247</sup> The loss of possible scientific research was all Jefferson lamented.

In his 1835 examination of American Democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville observed that the Native had but two “options for salvation: war or civilization.”<sup>248</sup> He observed the maxim that “civilization is the result of a long social endeavor that operates in one same place, and that different generations hand down.”<sup>249</sup> Therefore, he concluded, the nomadic Native was a barbarian in the true sense: not Greek, not Western, and certainly not civilized. What Tocqueville appeared to neglect, however, was that it was the biological and literal war inherent to European colonization that uprooted ten thousand year-old civilizations and greatly attributed to the de-civilization of the Native American. Simply, Tocqueville’s cure was the germ. It was Western Civilization that eradicated the West’s civilization. Additionally, although Tocqueville did not question the Natives’ ability to become civilized under the strictly European definition, he misplaced their motive.

The American Native was motivated by an age-old pride. In his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *American Heroes, Profiles of Men and Women Who Shapes Early America*, historian Edmund S. Morgan wrote that the “unyielding Indian” should greatly “impress” anyone “who reads vary far in [their]

<sup>242</sup> Aaron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. 6.

<sup>243</sup> The phrase, “culture before contact” is taken from the title of the publication, “Cultures Before Contact: The Late Prehistory of Ohio and Surrounding Regions,” edited by Robert A Genheimer.

<sup>244</sup> *The First American West: The Ohio River Valley, 1750-1820*.

<sup>245</sup> Jefferson, “Query XI.” 138.

<sup>246</sup> Lepper, *Ohio Archeology: An Illustrated Chronicle of Ohio’s Ancient American Indian Cultures*. 238.

<sup>247</sup> Jefferson, “Query XI” in *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*. 143.

<sup>248</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. 312.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 313.

voluminous literature.”<sup>250</sup> Morgan wrote of the Natives’ uniqueness and boasted their “overwhelming diversity.” He concluded that “linguists today recognize 375 different languages” among the many Native nations.<sup>251</sup> Tocqueville himself recognized such supreme diversity and pride. In volume one of his *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville concluded, “The Indian...lives and dies in the midst of these dreams of his pride.”<sup>252</sup> He asserted:

To the perfection of our arts he wants to oppose only the resources of the wilderness; to our tactics, only his undisciplined courage; to the profundity of our design, only the spontaneous instincts of his savage nature. He succumbs in this unequal struggle.<sup>253</sup>

For Tocqueville, however, the Natives’ yearn for the utmost “freedom of the woods” was driven by their pride *against* the European perception of the prerequisites and definitions of civilization. Although not altogether untrue, the Native’s pride was driven by something much deeper—their pride *for* the civilization of their past. Edmond Morgan summarized this subtle conflict as a clash between distant worlds.

In Europe, and indeed in most of the world, the acquisition and possession of riches constitutes the ultimate basis for social esteem. We may think it better to be born rich than to become rich, but in our society wealth has seldom been thought a handicap. Among the Indians, on the other hand, there existed a deliberate indifference to wealth, and indiffer-

ence that could sometimes be infuriating to the white man. ...The Indian could afford to scorn riches and to shun the industry necessary to acquire them, because in his society it was the man that counted, not what he owned.<sup>254</sup>

The many observations and treatises of the Native Americans’ political, religious, and social life during the late Colonial period speak to this pride’s deep permeation into tribal ecology. In the spring of 1755, Colonel James Smith was captured by the Delaware Indians while pioneering Braddock’s Road, a “12-foot highway through the Virginian forest”<sup>255</sup> For the next four years, Smith lived and hunted with his captives, learning much of their ways and experiencing many of their customs. Although his proceeding narrative speaks bountifully of the particular Delaware Indian habits and customs, Smith’s philosophical observations of his Native captors provide a unique insight into the their pride *for* their civilization. Two years after being captured and while they were hunting along the Olen-tangy River, Smith described his new step-brother and Delaware chief, Tecaughretanego, as “an eminent counselor,” a “first-rate warrior, statesman, and hunter,” and “a truly great man.”<sup>256</sup> Nearly 50 years later, Smith, who later served as a delegate in the American Continental Congress, signed the American Declaration of Independence, and served in the Kentucky Legislature, furthered his praise of his brother, writing:

---

<sup>250</sup> Morgan, Edmund S. *American Heroes: Profiles of Men and Women who Shaped Early America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010. 39.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>252</sup> Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*. 305.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

---

<sup>254</sup> Morgan, *American Heroes: Profiles of Men and Women who Shaped Early America*. 50.

<sup>255</sup> Lewis, Jon E. *The Mammoth Book of The West: The Making of the American West*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1996.16.

<sup>256</sup> Smith, James. “Col. James Smith’s Life Among the Delawares, 1755-1759” in *The Account of Mary Rowlandson and Other Indian Captivity Narratives*. Horace Kephart, ed. Mineola: Dover Publications, 1915. 31; 35; 38.

Tecaughretanego was no common person, but was among the Indians as Socrates in the ancient heathen world; and, it may be, equal to him, if not in wisdom and in learning, yet perhaps in patience and fortitude.<sup>257</sup>

The most striking aspect of his remembrances is their irony: Smith, the champion revolutionary leader and lawyer, rebuked western civilization's founder and praised the savages of the wilderness. He compared the Natives' civilization with that of ancient Greece, but dubbed only the latter as "heathen." Smith argued that the only difference between Tecaughretanego and Socrates was in their opportunity to acquire knowledge—"learning." Hidden in his words is a subtle critique of the foundation of western civilization. Smith claimed that, although Tecaughretanego may not be equal "in wisdom and in learning," his step-brother's "patience and fortitude" surpassed those held by Socrates. These latter philosophic qualities are somehow more important to the highly educated and intellectual Smith. During the four years with his step-brother, Smith grew to understand the natural philosophy of the Native. Although their "learning" of the wilderness was great and their abilities within its wooded blockade magnificent, Native philosophy centered on thankfulness, fortitude, and the human heart. Smith remembered that, over a sumptuous feast of roasted Buffalo, Tecaughretanego blessed the food talking of the "necessity and pleasure of receiving the necessary supports of life with thankfulness," as Owaneeyo is the "great giver."<sup>258</sup>

The Native Americans' pride was also centered in human dignity. "The whole Indian mode of government was designed to emphasize" the inherent "dignity of the

individual," wrote Edmund Morgan.<sup>259</sup> In his 1765 treatise, *A Concise Account of North America*, the innovative and exemplar commander of the French and Indian War Robert Rogers documented:

The great and fundamental principles of [the Indians'] policy are, that every man is naturally free and independent; that no one...on earth has any right to deprive him of his freedom and independency, and that nothing can be compensation for the loss of it.

This clear, backwoods, and free account of the natural rights of man was written ten years before the white man's Declaration of Independence and described not western civilization's enlightened mind but the free mind of the civilized west. Cadwallader Colden, the early eighteenth century physician, natural scientist, and lieutenant governor of New York wrote similarly of the Iroquois Nation. In his 1727 book, *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada*, he asserted:

Each Nation is an absolute Republic by its self, govern'd in all Publick Affairs of War and Peace by the Sachems or Old Men, who Authority and Power is gain'd by and consists wholly in the Opinion the rest of the Nation have of their Wisdom and Integrity. They never execute their Resolutions by Compulsion or Force upon any of their People.<sup>260</sup>

Colden's observation of republican government among the Iroquois predated those of the American Founding Fathers by over sixty years. In 1787, American Founding

---

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>258</sup> Owaneeyo is roughly translated to "God" or "Creator." Source: Smith, "Col. James Smith's Life Among the Delawares, 1755-1759." 38.

---

<sup>259</sup> Morgan, *American Heroes: Profiles of Men and Women who Shaped Early America*. 50.

<sup>260</sup> Colden, Cadwallader. *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada*, 1727.

Father Alexander Hamilton introduced *The Federalist*, arguing that it has been “reserved to the people of this country to decide” whether “good government” can be formed by “reflection and choice,” or, if the world is “forever destined to depend...on accident and force.” Hamilton was correct when he argued that it was up to “the people of this country” to decide and prove a shining example to the world. What he did not know, however, was that the principles of independence, equality, the natural rights of man, and the practices of republican government were not new inventions on American shores and had already been firmly established and were brightly shining.

Lt. Henry Timberlake’s 1765 *Memoirs* also provide strikingly vivid details about how the Native American’s pride is depicted in their philosophy and modes of government. Timberlake spent over three months living amongst the Cherokee Indians of the Overhill country in early 1762—the same Indians Daniel Boone became highly acquainted with ten years later. Timberlake’s observations therein depict an ordered, agricultural, and natural civilization. The Cherokee people, he wrote, are of a “good uncultivated genius” and are “fond of speaking well.”<sup>261</sup> Their government was honest and was some form of a republic.<sup>262</sup> He wrote, “Merit alone creates their minister, and not the prejudice of party, which often creates ours.”<sup>263</sup> When Timberlake compared the Cherokees’ government to “ours,” he praised the former and subtly rebuked the latter—the great political institution of England. Timberlake’s ethno-graphical observations also took into account the Cherokee people’s health. In a time when the

average life expectancy of a European was 35 years, Timberlake wrote that a woman in the Cherokee village

...still continues her laborious tasks, and has yet strength enough to carry two hundred weight of wood on her back near a couple of miles. I am apt to think some of them, by their own computation, are near one hundred and fifty years old.

Most importantly, perhaps, Timberlake’s work is elusive and his depictions circumspect, providing enough information to momentarily quench the reader’s thirst while leaving them forever desiring more. This subtle nature of his work may be the most telling depiction of the Cherokee people: they are a mysteriously guarded but judicious people, driven forever to their past while standing on the periphery of the present.

A self-described “English Chikkasah,” James Adair observed similar traits among the Natives living between Georgia and Virginia. His voluminous 1775 account *The History of the American Indians* is today regarded as “one of the most valuable primary accounts of the southeastern Indians.”<sup>264</sup> Adair perceived that the Natives were:

Governed by the plain and honest law of nature, their whole constitution breathes nothing but liberty: and, when there is that equality of conditions, manners, and privileges, and a constant familiarity in society, as prevails in every Indian nation, and through all our British colonies, there glows such a cheerfulness and

<sup>261</sup> Timberlake, Henry. *The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake: The Story of a Soldier, Adventurer, and Emissary to the Cherokees, 1756-1765*. Duane H. King, ed., Cherokee: Cherokee Indian Press, 2007. 30.

<sup>262</sup> Timberlake, *The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake*. 36.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>264</sup> Adair, James. *The History of the American Indians*. Kathryn E. Holland Braund, ed., Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2005. xi.

warmth of courage in each of their breasts, as cannot be described.<sup>265</sup>

Although “it is reputed merit alone” that drove their social and political communities, Adair claimed that the Natives took great care in providing for their poor and for crafting “wisely framed” and honest laws.<sup>266</sup> Mid-nineteenth century American author James Fenimore Cooper argued in his notable work, *The Pioneers*, that law is what separates the civilized from the savage. Adair concludes his work asserting that his keen and extended observation of the southeastern Natives produced a portrait antithetical to the popular image of the Native American as the “savage of the wilderness.” He delivered them as courageous yet meek; cunning yet honest. Most importantly, Adair observed a civilization driven by virtue and formed by laws. He concluded that the Native system ultimately accorded with the “grand fundamental law—‘A natural ex, a virtue rex’”—meaning ‘Law by Nature, King by Virtue.’<sup>267</sup> In Ancient Greece, “barbarians” were those who were simply non-Greek. Strikingly, Adair concluded his voluminous work with the most famous of the Greek’s—Alexander the Great’s—last words to describe those whom his society had rejected as “barbarians.”

The Native was both a challenge and an insult to their European neighbors. They were the perfection of Europe’s Christian virtues mixed with the failures of its worldly vices. Their pride yielded extreme actions of compassion and cruelty; of chastity and courage. Their lives danced with the rhythms of the seasons yet their song was quieter than the morning dew. They were expressive yet said little and philosophical yet proud of being as thoughtless as the birds. Perhaps it was these inherent ironies

masked in half-naked “savagery” that forever tainted Europeans’ impressions of the Native American.

### *A New Education*

If the Anglo-Native collision produced negative effects for the latter, it was overall advantageous for the former. Although hailed as pioneers, most European immigrants knew nothing of the hunt, weaponry, or subsisting within raw nature. Daniel Boone’s ancestors were Quakers from Southern England with little skill or knowledge in handling weaponry or navigating the woods. They were farmers and weavers; plowmen and homesteaders. Historically, Europeans were prohibited from participating in the hunt and every western movement they made plainly proved their naturally resulting inefficacy. Learning to hunt was one of the many adjustments these backcountry Pennsylvanian pioneers made—and made quickly. Stephen Aaron noted, “While the peoples of the backcountry imported a variety of subsistence traditions, all faced a seasoning period in which old ways were adapted to new conditions.”<sup>268</sup>

New conditions required a new education. Faced by the rugged and wholly untamed frontier, the settlers’ education was both on the technical and on the technique. Aaron wrote, “Technology obviously mattered to hunters, but technique counted more.”<sup>269</sup> Early nineteenth century Boone historian John Mason Peck summarized both the character and importance of this education. He wrote,

To gain the skill of an accomplished hunter requires talents, patience, perseverance, sagacity, and habits of thinking. Amongst other qualifica-

---

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 375.

<sup>266</sup> Adair, *The History of the American Indians*. 416-421.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid., 422.

---

<sup>268</sup> Aaron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. 21.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid., 22.

tions, knowledge of human nature, and especially of Indian character, is indispensable to the pioneer of the wilderness. Add to these, self-possession, self-control, and promptness in execution. Persons who are unaccustomed to a frontier residence know not how much, in the preservation of life, and in obtaining subsistence, depends on such characteristics.<sup>270</sup>

The characteristics of the hunt required a natural mastery of oneself and his surroundings.

To be able to shoot was good but to be able to harvest was best. On the hunt, the technical sharpshooter was always surpassed by the technique of the hunter. To locate was better than to mark and to harvest wisely was best of all. Take for example the Kentucky buffalo hunt. In the mid-eighteenth century, the volume and density of the Kentucky herd was so concentrated that it seemed as though a hunter's meal was as good as his aim. The educated hunter knew better, however. In his early nineteenth century interview with Reverend John D. Shane, western pioneer William Clinkenbeard emphasized his technique. He believed, "Kill the leader if you could find it out, and you might kill three or four [buffaloes]."<sup>271</sup> This was because buffalo are a mob stocking, leader-follower, and herding animal. Fall the leader and the rest of the herd will hover directionless, supplying the hunter ample time to reload and increase his bounty. Pioneer Abraham Thomas wrote that, during one hunt he employed such a

measure and, "had we been disposed, we might have shot the whole gang."<sup>272</sup>

The late eighteenth century frontiersman Michael Stoner also serves as a great example. He was often described as being "an indifferent hand to shoot at mark...but at game, he was the best man in Kentucky."<sup>273</sup> Stoner prospered on the frontier because he understood the technique and not the technology—he "seemed to understand the motions of living animals" better than the releasing mechanism of his flintlock.<sup>274</sup> Stephen Aaron concluded, "A solid education in animal habits and habitats means the difference between success and very serious failure."<sup>275</sup> Such an education was lost on most early hunters. Standing on the herd's windward side, they would fall the wrong buffalo first. This blunder not only reduced their harvest of fresh meat and animal hide but it also created a stampede in their direction. Every pioneer, hunter, frontiersman, and settler faced the harsh reality of the New World's entirely new education.

In his chilling novel, *The Revenant*, Michael Punke wrote of the frontier as a fierce teacher of "collective responsibility."<sup>276</sup> He concluded, "Though no law was written, there was a crude rule of law, adherence to a covenant that transcended...selfish interests."<sup>277</sup> If the natural world of the frontier required a firm dedication to acquiring this new education, then it also supplied the means: the experienced Native. In Europe, hunting was a sport, regulated by the government and solely composed by aristocrats. In the arduous and severe lands

<sup>270</sup> Peck, "Life of Daniel Boone, The Pioneer of Kentucky." 5.

<sup>271</sup> Lucien Beckner, ed., "Reverend John D. Shane's Interview with Pioneer William Clinkenbeard," *FCHQ* 2 (April 1928): 106.

<sup>272</sup> Clough, Elizabeth Thatcher, ed., "Abraham Thomas: 'This Small Legacy of Experience'," *Kentucky Ancestors* 26 (Autumn 1990): 77.

<sup>273</sup> Enoch, Harry G. *Pioneer Voices: Interviews with Early Settlers of Clark County Kentucky*. 128.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>275</sup> Aaron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. 23.

<sup>276</sup> Punke, Michael. *The Revenant*. New York: Picador Publishing, 2002. 39.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

of the American backcountry, however, hunting was a necessity, regulated by the laws of nature and included the ranks of only the strongest and most-rugged souls. Every step westward was a step away from the lives of their ancestors and toward a seasoning of their ways into Native ways. Although extreme, the shift was gradual. Obtaining an intimate acquaintance with nature and its subtle movements required tutelage and time. In his late eighteenth century work, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania*, Joseph Doddridge concluded that European settlers acquired this tutelage—“how to dress, how to track, how to decoy, how to wait patiently and silently, how to live off the land”—directly from their observations of and associations with the Native.<sup>278</sup>

The practical use of European technology combined with the important fundamentals of Native technique transformed the pioneer’s mode of subsistence to abundance and transfigured their enlightened philosophy to a magical romance. This blended spectacle observed the woods of the American West as an animated land, acted on by magical powers, yet subject to the hunter’s iron will. For the red man, the hunt was a sacred act of spirituality, for they had a deep and ancient kinship with animals and the natural world. For the most part, the white man instead perceived the hunt as an almost sacred act of mastery—of manhood and of self-inflated dominion. In general, most European settlers benefited under the tutelage of the “how of the wilderness” but few stooped to learn the ever important “why.”

---

<sup>278</sup> Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania from 1763-1783 inclusive, Together with a Review of the State of Society and Manners of the First Settlers of the Western Country*. Pittsburgh, 1824. 179. 83.

## CHAPTER FIVE With *His Gun*

### *Introduction*

It was March 1778. Virginia Governor Patrick Henry could not believe his eyes. Although cast upon his desk were papers forming militias, urgent letters from George Washington’s encampment at Valley Forge, and the many particulars of correspondence concerning their recent treaty with France, Governor Henry’s attention was fixed on the West. Atop the papers strewn across his Williamsburg desk read the note: “Daniel Boone Captured By Shawnees.” The frontier report continued its devastating literature, deeming “all of Boone’s party [as] lost.”<sup>279</sup>

As Governor, Henry was well acquainted with the “distressing” and “deplorable conditions” of “Kentucki” and understood that, according to his 1777 letter to General Edward Hand, “offensive operations” along with “working on [the Savages] fears” could alone “produce Defense ag. Indians.”<sup>280</sup> Therefore, a strong yet simple colonial presence in Kentucky provided Henry’s western periphery immense security and advantage. Although it boasted a meager fifty settlers in late 1777, Daniel’s station on the banks of the Kentucky River—later called Boonesborough—formed the bulwark between the untamed frontier and Henry’s Virginia; between the Shawnee and the British.<sup>281</sup>

Henry and his fellow American revolutionaries knew they could not fight a two-sided war. In his letter to Colonel William

---

<sup>279</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 167.

<sup>280</sup> “Governor Patrick Henry to General Edward Hand, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1777,” in *Frontier Defense On The Upper Ohio, 1777-1778*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds., Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1912. 30-31.

<sup>281</sup> Draper, Lyman. *Lyman Draper’s Manuscripts*, 4B118-ED, 125-Ed.

Fleming on February 19, 1778, Governor Henry concluded his plan for the defense of Virginia, blaming the British for inciting the Shawnee against America's western frontiersmen:

I must tell you Sir that I really blush for the occasion of this War with the Shawnee. I doubt not but you detest the vile assassins who have brought it on us at this critical Time when our whole Force was wanted in another Quarter. ...Is not this the work of Tories? No man but an Enemy to American Independence will do it, and thus oblige our People to be hutning after Indians in the Woods, instead of facing Gen. Howe in the field. ...But [the Shawnee] are... Agents for the Enemy, who have taken this method to find employment for the brave back Woodsmen at home, and prevent their joining Gen Washington to strike a decisive stroke for Independency at this critical time.<sup>282</sup>

Henry no doubt blamed the British for Daniel's capture, as, although indirect, Daniel's success in establishing a permanent American fort in the frontier posed a great threat to British control. By April, numerous reports returned from Boonesborough, exposing "a poor, distressed, half-naked, half-starved people."<sup>283</sup> Their great leader, pathfinder, and friend had been killed or captured—the latter being the worse of the two—and the fort subsequently fell into disarray. Fearing the worst, Daniel's family headed back east. His Virginian rivals vied for command and

the newly formed vacuum of power furnished unrest. Western historian Stephen Aaron wrote, "Deprived of alternative fare and tormented by Indians, pioneers lived 'on their guns' and turned to men like Boone to feed them and lead them." Daniel Boone was "a hero in hunting and warfare;" he founded, led, and defended Kentucky's first settlement; but now he was supposed as dead and so also seemed Boonesborough and the Western cause.<sup>284</sup>

### *The Woods of My Youth*

Daniel Boone was an early pupil of the wilderness. The woods of his youth teemed with more than wildlife—it teemed with life. The early eighteenth century Quaker homestead observed many peculiar shadows within its wooded periphery, welcomed its many whispers, and befriended its multitude of mysterious movements. The illimitable forests of the Pennsylvanian frontier illuminated Daniel's youthful restlessness and curiosity. In the boundless freedom of her woods he found peace, under her quiet canopy her found consolation and the great expression of his soul. Robert Morgan noted, "For Daniel, the forest was his mother's world, a place of shadows and mystery, infinite diversions and pleasures."<sup>285</sup> Beyond this enchantment, however, it was his teacher. The story of Daniel's westward movement is a story of his ever-heightening appreciation of the natural world and its many natural civilizations.

The Boone homestead was familiar with its native neighbors. In 1728, six years before Daniel was born, Native relations in the region intensified. Anticipating a raid, most inhabitants of the Bucks County frontier "generally fled" for the safety of surrounding towns. Obstinate, however,

---

<sup>282</sup> "Governor Patrick Henry to Colonel William Fleming, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1778," in *Frontier Defense On The Upper Ohio, 1777-1778*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds., Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1912. 205-209.

<sup>283</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 166.

---

<sup>284</sup> Aaron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. 29-30.

<sup>285</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 10.



the justice of the peace sent a dispatch to the colonial governor pleading for support “in order to defend our fronteers.” He continued:

There remains about twenty men with me to guard my mill, where I have about 1000 bushels of wheat and fflour; and we are resolved to defend ourselves to ye last Extremity.<sup>286</sup>

Such a resolute and determined spirit was to be found in George Boone, Daniel’s grandfather. Although often described as a family of careful and judicious Quakers, the Boones were fearless and tough, ready to “defend their possessions and rights with their lives.”<sup>287</sup> They were of a hard stock but a gentle spirit. During what is believed to be the same 1728 conflict, George Boone led the successful rescue effort of two Native squaws who were being held by a faction of white settlers, entertaining “lustful and murderous intentions.”<sup>288</sup> This single 1728 episode lucidly portrays the ideology of the Boones: they seemed to always defend their *own*: if was their belief, their crop, their frontier, or their view of justice under attack, they were forever fighting and leading the charge.

By the time of Daniel’s birth in 1734, local Native relations mostly settled.<sup>289</sup> In 1736, a party of Delaware led by Sassoonan—or Allummoppees<sup>290</sup>, the “king” of the Schuylkill, visited George Boone, who now

“enjoyed a reputation among the Indians for befriending natives.”<sup>291</sup> The Delaware of the mid-eighteenth century were peaceful but not friendly with their white neighbors. They were not in the habit of visiting white settlements for community or rest. Boone Historian John Mack Faragher noted in his biography that such a visit was, therefore, “important enough to record” in the Provincial Records of Pennsylvania.<sup>292</sup> The Delaware’s interest in the Boones was something extraordinary in the true sense of the word. They had not come to trade, to barter, or for diplomatic purposes. Rather, Sassoonan and his fellow braves emerged from the safety of their woods in search of Boone’s trusted community.

On one occasion, the Quakers of Bucks County were alarmed by the arrival of a party of braves, dressed and painted for war. Expecting the worst, they readied for battle. To their surprise and great relief, however, they quickly learned that the Natives had come to their aid, believing that their “peaceful white brothers were in danger” from a neighboring tribe.<sup>293</sup> Perhaps, such peaceful relations were due to the Quaker influence. Or, perhaps, such relations were dependent upon the amiability and strong character of the Boone family, respected by the strong Native brave for their honor in life, charity, and courage under distress.

Daniel Boone was no foreigner to Native habits and customs. In the introductory chapter of his book, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*, John Bakeless wrote that Daniel’s “fascination which the wilderness exercised on [him] to the end of his life began almost as early as his

---

<sup>286</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 8.

<sup>287</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 6-7.

<sup>288</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 19.

<sup>289</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 8.

<sup>290</sup> In 1715 Sassoonana, also known as Allummoppees, succeeded his father Tamanend as Delaware chieftain of the Turtle Clan and maintained semi-friendly relations with English settlers until his death in the Autumn of 1747.

---

<sup>291</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 19.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 19; Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 110.

<sup>293</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 8.

knowledge of Indians.”<sup>294</sup> Daniel’s youth in Penn’s woods forever impressed upon him a love of the wilderness and an intimate connection with its natural inhabitants. Bakeless continued:

From these friendly aborigines [of his youth] the future Indian fighter was learning the red man’s habits, character, and way of life, mastering the kinks and quirks of red psychology, gaining that amazing ability to ‘think Indian’ which in after life enabled him, when trailing Indians, to know exactly what they were going to do next. Many a pioneer document from the desperate and bloody Kentucky years shows Daniel Boone quietly assuring his companions that the Indians would soon do thus-and-so—as invariably they did!<sup>295</sup>

The composite border region of Daniel’s youth early afforded his restless and curious mind interesting subjects to experience and observe. Just as William Penn told the Delaware in early 1681 that he desired to “winn and gain their love and friendship by a kind, just and peaceable life,” Daniel’s youth in Penn’s woods taught him the strength and honor of the magnanimous Native and impressed upon him a desire to live peacefully by their side.<sup>296</sup> Such natural scholarship instilled a “fervid love of nature” and its exotic inhabitants within his impressionable mind.<sup>297</sup>

### *Early Meetings of Hunters*

From the beginning, Daniel’s calling to the woods was almost biblical in proportion. As a youth, Daniel’s job was to follow the family cattle in the woods, returning them every evening for milking and for the protection of the immediate Boone homestead. One evening, during the mid 1740s, he became so absorbed in his own wooded expeditions that he overlooked the hour, his family, and his duties as herdsman and disappeared into the night. Although dusk, his mother’s eyes could catch neither signs of the family herd nor the family herdsman returning for the night. Her characteristically cheerful disposition grew increasingly pessimistic. Before she lost her cattle to the darkness—and to the Pennsylvanian frontier—the determined Welsh mother set out to make the five-mile trip to the family’s pastures and round up the cattle herself. An adept frontierswoman, Sarah succeeded and stayed her mind by milking, straining, and churning butter from the clabbered milk through the night. As the milk thickened and soured, however, so did the morning air. But Daniel was still not to be found. Calm but expecting the worst, Sarah made the trip back to town to get help. The search party hunted from the Oley Hills to the Neversink Mountains—nine miles to the northwest—but found no traces of the young woodsman. The next morning the party determined to search even further into the Pennsylvanian wilderness. By evening, they spotted a column of smoke in the distance. Approaching slowly, as such an omen could lead to either hostility or promise, they found the victorious hunter contently seated in “his temple,” smoking a bearskin and roasting fresh meat. Looking up to find the search party’s eyes furiously reflecting his fire’s glare, Daniel calmly responded that he had started tracking the bear two days prior and did not want to waste it. Besides, the town

---

<sup>294</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 9.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>296</sup> Penn, William. Letter to the “King of the Indians,” October 18, 1681, Richard Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn, eds., *The Papers of William Penn*, 5 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981-86), 2:128-129.

<sup>297</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 112.

got fresh bear meat and he an outlet for his restless spirit.

Although this story may not be historically accurate, as it appears only in later accounts of Boone's life, it reveals much about his character and destiny. A parallel to Luke's gospel account of the twelve-year-old Jesus lost from Mary and Joseph but at home conversing in his "father's house," this story presents the twelve-year-old Daniel lost from the homestead but at home in nature's house. Robert Morgan provided a simple anecdote for Daniel's natural calling: when he and his cronies played "Hunt the Indian," Daniel played the Indian and most often could not be found.<sup>298</sup>

The rugged experiences and inhabitants of the border taught Daniel the inimitable lessons of the hunt and the secret habits of wild animals. His youth was imbued with the erotic woods and its natives were his tutor. John Mack Faragher wrote:

When [Daniel] ventured out of his own neighborhood into the woods surrounding the Schuylkill settlements, the young hunter entered a mixed cultural world. On woodland thoroughfares the hunters of many nations met, and over a smoke of tobacco or kinnikinnick, a pungent mixture of dried bark and leaves, they traded news and information.<sup>299</sup>

From his observations and many interactions with the American Natives, Daniel early learned wilderness subsistence and survival, how to find and apply the many medicinal roots, herbs, and wild berries of the forest, and how to adeptly track the movements of animals and mark the lay of the land. Most importantly, the curious youth learned of the many westward flowing rivers and heard many fireside tales of the Eden of the West.

---

<sup>298</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 16.

<sup>299</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 19.

The Boone family's move to the Yadkin Valley provided their young hunter an updated canvas for his passions. The Yadkin was a rougher and wilder country than Penn's woods. By the mid-eighteenth century, North Carolina boasted a mere 25,000 inhabitants and its extreme western borderland of the Yadkin Valley contained much less. Lyman Draper described Daniel's revised woods as a "land of plenty and happiness."<sup>300</sup> The Boones settled in the undulating prairie north of the Yakin's forks known as Buffalo Lick. The land teemed with wildlife due to its rich canebrakes and luxurious meadows. John Bakeless boasted the fertility of the Yadkin, claiming that, in the beginning, a hunter could "take thirty deer a day without leaving the valley."<sup>301</sup> In his late twentieth century account of the *Peopling of British North America*, Harvard Professor and Pulitzer Prize Winner Bernard Bailyn wrote that, as early as 1700, the valley exported 54,000 deerskins to European markets.<sup>302</sup> The colony's bounty of deerskin was so opulent that a "buck"—"a dressed skin weighing about two and a half pounds, worth about forty cents a pound," or about a dollar per skin—became synonymous for the American dollar.<sup>303</sup>

Hitherto, the hunt supplied Daniel an outlet for his passions and recreation for his soul. In the sumptuous Yadkin, however, he could "unite profit with pleasure."<sup>304</sup> By 1753, Daniel's skills as a marksman, hunter, and scout were wildly celebrated and honored. He supplied the local markets of Salisbury with his many bounties of pelts, furs, and produce, profiting several shillings for

---

<sup>300</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 126.

<sup>301</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 19.

<sup>302</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986), 111.

<sup>303</sup> Brown, Meredith. *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana States Universtiy Press, 2008. 10.

<sup>304</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 126.

every bearskin or deer hide. Daniel also traded his bear bacon and ginseng for more traps, lead, and powder. Folklore has it that Bear Creek in the Yadkin Valley was so named after Daniel took ninety-one bears along its banks in one season.<sup>305</sup> A winter trapper, Daniel left the woods in March with more profit than a blacksmith or weaver could make in four years.

By his late teens, Daniel's ability to mark surpassed even his Native neighbors. After depositing his furs in Salisbury in the spring, he often partook in local shooting matches. Such competition on the frontier was normal and often supplied the highest honors and respect to the victors. It was more than a display of arms; more than simple sport. These backcountry shooting matches were an external declaration of the frontier's internal pulse, sorting the weak from the strong. According to legend, Daniel won many a match by holding "out his rifle with one hand only and hitting the target."<sup>306</sup>

Although the local Native nation of the Catawbas was cordial with the white settlers and supplied Daniel with increased observation and tutelage, one Catawba brave grew envious of Daniel's skill and notoriety. Known as Saucy Jack, the Catawba brave lost to Daniel in such a competition and resolved "to have no superior alive!"<sup>307</sup> Before the resentful brave could act, however, his intentions reached the ear of Squire Boone, who retorted, "Well, if it has come to this, I'll kill first!"<sup>308</sup> Picking up his hatchet, the quiet Quaker set out in search of the brave.<sup>309</sup> Learning of Squire's response, however, Saucy Jack wisely vanished. Per-

haps he feared Daniel's faultless rifle, or perhaps the lion heart of his father. In either case, this anecdote serves to illustrate the loyalty of the Boone family as well as the height of Daniel's fame and great depth of his ability as a hunter and woodsman, which "excited the envy of the friendly and the terror of the hostile Indian."<sup>310</sup> It also depicts how Daniel learned from his early experiences with Natives. Daniel later wrote:

I often went hunting with [Indians], and frequently gained their applause for my activity at our shooting matches. I was careful not to exceed many of them in shooting, for no people are more envious than they in this sport. I could observe, in their countenances and gestures, the greatest expressions of joy when they exceeded me; and, when the reverse happened, envy.<sup>311</sup>

Unlike his fellow hunters and settlers, Daniel was revered by the Native Americans as their brother, hunting companion, and equal. In turn, Daniel respected their people and their ways.

### *The Monongahela's Baptism*

The glares of war momentarily halted Daniel's profitable forays into the wilderness. By 1754, the weight of the Seven Years' War pressed heavily upon the border settlements of Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland. In January, Virginian Governor Dinwiddie met Major George Washington's alarms of French encroachment upon the Ohio with a letter to President Rowan of North Carolina, "soliciting men to join" the cause to "repel these French aggressors."<sup>312</sup>

<sup>305</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 37.

<sup>306</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 39.

<sup>307</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 128.

<sup>308</sup> Boome, William P. "Letter from William P. Boone to Lyman Draper, April 27, 1846" in *Draper Manuscripts* 19C1; Lyman Draper interview with Isaiah Boone, 1846, *Draper Manuscripts* 19C61.

<sup>309</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 20.

<sup>310</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 128.

<sup>311</sup> Boone, Daniel. *The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone, Formerly a Hunter; Containing a Narrative of the Wars of Kentucky, as Given by Himself*. 13.

<sup>312</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 128.

The French had constructed a fort at the forks of the Ohio—at the convergence point of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers—with the purpose of controlling the Ohio Country. In 1755, English General Edward Braddock was sent to North America to drive the French from the strategic point of Fort Duquesne. Braddock’s military experience boasted over 35 years of European war, which proved only disadvantageous to the seasoned General’s American campaign. While stationed in Philadelphia, General Braddock displayed his confidence with Pennsylvania postmaster Benjamin Franklin, stating that he was sure he would take the fort within two or three days. Franklin retorted with a warning, claiming that the American backwoods was no place for English regulars and that his long line was in danger of “ambuscades of Indians, who, by constant practice, are dexterous in laying and executing them.”<sup>313</sup> Later, Franklin recorded that Braddock:

smil’d at my Ignorance, and reply’d, ‘These Savage may indeed be a formidable Enemy to your raw American militia; but upon the King’s regular and disciplined Troops, Sir, it is impossible they should make any impression.’

The naïve General both declined Franklin’s advice and the assistance of Native scouts. The Delaware chief Scaroyady—or Monacattootha—wrote to the Governor of Pennsylvania, “A great many of our warriors left [Braddock] & would not be under his Command,” for “he looked upon us as dogs and would never hear anything what was said to him.” Scaroyady continued, “We often endeavored to advise him, and to tell him of the dangers he was in with his Soldiers, but he never appeared pleased with

us.”<sup>314</sup> From its beginning, the doomed campaign and its reputable English General underestimated the general “rawness” of America’s howling wilderness.

Daniel Boone accompanied Braddock’s fatal campaign as a teamster, blacksmith, and wagoner at the age of twenty.<sup>315</sup> He joined with a hundred North Carolina troops under Captain Hugh Waddell, who was known for his “energy and bravery.”<sup>316</sup> Daniel’s task as wagoner was to both cut the road for and transport the baggage of Braddock’s army. This, however, was no simple task. Lyman Draper noted that such a job required the most “unwearied care and patience” to properly conduct the “heavily laden baggage-wagons over the hills and mountains, through streams, ravines, and quagmires” from Fort Cumberland to Fort Duquesne.<sup>317</sup> The arduous expedition crawled slowly through the American wilderness. George Washington, who served as a Captain on the campaign, wrote to his brother that Braddock’s army was “halting to level every Mole Hill, & to erect Bridges over every brook.”<sup>318</sup> Additionally, “psychological warfare” continuously plagued the long train of pompous Regulars, as the Natives “pinned the scalps” of the line’s outliers “to trees and left the mutilated bodies where they would be seen by Braddock’s troops.”<sup>319</sup> Unmoved, Braddock stayed his English gaze at Fort Duquesne.

<sup>314</sup> Message of Scaroyady conveyed by Conrad Weiser to the governor of Pennsylvania, *Memorandum of Conrad Weiser*, August 23, 1755, Penn MS, Large Folio, II, Historical Society of Philadelphia, qtd. in *Conrad Weiser*, 390.

<sup>315</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 13.

<sup>316</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 129.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>318</sup> Ellis, Joseph J. *His Excellency, George Washington*. New York: Vintage Books, 2004. 21.

<sup>319</sup> Ward, Matthew. *Breaking The Backcountry: The Seven Years' War In Virginia And Pennsylvania 1754-1765*, University of Pittsburgh Press; 1 edition (October 17, 2004), 7; Brown, Meredith Mason. *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the*

<sup>313</sup> Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography*. Barns & Co. Inc., 1944. 152-153.

After weeks of interminable labor, the party of around 2,000 passed over the Monongahela River around two o'clock in the afternoon on the memorable July ninth. Lieutenant-Colonel Gage's 350 Regulars lead the crossing, followed closely by Sr. John St. Clair's "working party" of 250 men. Immediately succeeding the initial force was Braddock's artillery and wagons. The English General placed the petulant native militias of Virginia, Maryland, and Carolina dishonorably in the rear, as he believed them unable to possess "courage or good will."<sup>320</sup>

With great ceremony and the Grenadier's March beating their steps—with their "brilliant...dazzling uniforms... burnished arms gleaming in the bright summer's sun"—the chosen army of a little over a thousand troops advanced down the bottleneck of Braddock's Road. In files of no more than three or four men, the company disappeared into the wooded periphery that receded into the great Monongahela. Driven by their honor and pomp, the triumphant Regulars dreamed little of the appalling horror lurking behind every tree. The American wilderness concealed the vicious forces of the great Pontiac of the Ottawas and the Shawanoes chief Cornstalk of Chillicothe. This would be the first of many encounters between Daniel Boone and the Chillicothe family of Cornstalk. The two Native forces were positioned in "two ravines heading near each other, with the trail between" them, ultimately threading the needle for their victory.<sup>321</sup> At length, the anticipating Natives released their horror and poured down upon their unsuspecting enemy, "marvel[ing] at the magnificent targets [the British's] red coats made."<sup>322</sup> Extreme confusion and anarchy ensued from

all sides of the cadaverous valley. Instinctively, the American militia ran to the nearest trees—"firing individually, behind the shelter of tree trunks"—while the British Regulars stood in the clearing, waiting frantically for their commander's orders. Lyman Draper described the scene:

The French and Indians were almost of a man invisible, hidden behind trees, logs, bushes, tall wild grass, and in the deep ravines, save a skulking savage would momentarily rush from his covert to bring down some exposed officer or tear a scalp from some fallen foe, while the half-bewildered soldiery fired their platoons aimlessly into the air or tree-tops.

The universal chaos also poured heavily upon the baggage trains, for the tomahawk's rage speared little. Once the Regulars broke, throwing "away their arms and Ammunition, and even their Cloaths, to escape faster," the wagoners fell under heavy fire.<sup>323</sup> Daniel was one of the few wagoners to live through the hellish barrage. Daniel's son Nathan remembered, "When the retreat began [my father] cut his team loose from the wagon and escaped with the horses."<sup>324</sup> The battle lasted a mere three hours but took over 750 English to a meager 33 French and Indian. It was an outright and raw massacre—one that taught its survivors lessons as deep as the grave. French captive James Smith of our earlier story was forced to witness the ambush from afar, greatly pitying the fallen and the unlucky prisoners. In his memoirs, he wrote, "About sun down I beheld a small party coming in [the fort] with

---

*Making of America*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana States University Press, 2008. 18.

<sup>320</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 129.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>322</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 14.

---

<sup>323</sup> Robert Orme, "Journal of General Braddock's Expedition," *British Library*, 102-107; Ward, Matthew. *Breaking The Backcountry: The Seven Years' War In Virginia And Pennsylvania 1754-1765*, University of Pittsburgh Press; 1 edition (October 17, 2004), 7.

<sup>324</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 13.

about a dozen prisoners, stripped naked, with their hands tied...and their faces...and bodies...blackened.”<sup>325</sup> One by one, continued Smith, the captives were tied naked to pine posts and slowly burned to death with red-hot irons and burning pines branches, the melted sap tearing into their flesh “on the banks of the Allegheny River.”<sup>326</sup>

George Washington wrote, the militiamen “behaved like Men and died like Soldiers’ while the regulars broke & run as sheep before Hounds.”<sup>327</sup> Washington himself buried the fallen General Braddock’s body in the “middle of the road and ran wagons over the site to hide the grave,” so that “Indians would not scalp and maim [his] body.”<sup>328</sup> Seventeen years after the massacre, the Presbyterian minister David McClure visited the bloodstained valley and recorded in his journal:

It was a melancholy spectacle to see the bones of men strewn over the ground, left to this day, without the solemn rite of sepulture...The bones had been gnawed by wolves, the vestiges of their teeth appearing on them, I examined several, & found the mark of the scalping knife on all.<sup>329</sup>

A young man, Daniel learned the import of wisdom within the wilderness and experienced first-hand both the beauties and terrors of the Western country. To his grave, he faulted Braddock’s extreme negligence and credited the “want of intelligence and reconnoitering parties” as the “sole cause[s]

of the defeat.”<sup>330</sup> Nathan Boone later remembered:

[My father] used to censure Braddock’s conduct, saying he neglected to keep out spies and flank guards. I think that somehow my father was connected with Washington’s colonial troops; he often spoke of Washington, whom both he and my mother personally knew.<sup>331</sup>

The campaign taught him the importance of the Native within the wooded stage of the virgin wilderness. He experienced the particular impact of Amerindian relations upon the success or failure of western effort and was forever careful never to venture loudly into the woods without an alliance, adequate defense, or bargaining advantage.

### *Of Romance*

After Daniel’s baptism by combat, he returned to the peaceful Yadkin Valley and tried to forget the brutish horrors that had filled the great canopies of the Western woods. Back in his father’s cabin, he took to nature and resumed his pleasures within her woods. Soon, the serene romance of the Yadkin wilderness acted upon him and sedated his soul. On August 14, 1756, he married Rebecca Bryan—who was described as being his equal in everything but the hunt. She was “a woman capable of the hard work and childbearing and dangers, and excitement, of the American frontier” who shared an equal love of and ability within the wilderness.<sup>332</sup> Her nephew, Daniel Bryan, later remembered her as a

---

<sup>325</sup> Smith, “Col. James Smith’s Life Among the Delawares, 1755-1759.” 6.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>327</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 45.

<sup>328</sup> Ellis, *His Excellency, George Washington*. 22; Brown, *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America*. 18.

<sup>329</sup> *Diary of David McClure, Doctor of Divinity, 1748-1820* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1899), 48.

---

<sup>330</sup> General Kane’s *Military History of Great Britain*; Lofaro, Michael A. *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003. 15.

<sup>331</sup> Boone, *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. 13.

<sup>332</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 49.

good bit taller than her husband, “buxom,” and of a larger build than the “average woman of the time.”<sup>333</sup> Daniel in contrast was described as “a sort of pony-built man,” about five foot eight but as strong as a horse, although one of his hunting companions admitted that he could “lift more than any man I ever saw.”<sup>334</sup> Many Boone historians suggest that, while Daniel was away on his many hunts, it was Rebecca that trained their children in marksmanship and woodsman-ship. Years later, when Daniel’s rheumatism reduced his abilities to mark, Rebecca joined him on his hunts and carried his long rifle.<sup>335</sup>

Rebecca was not unlike Daniel’s mother, Sarah Morgan, who was spirited but homely, tough but romantic. She was a true frontiersman’s wife, capable of adapting to continuously changing scenery but stable enough to practice “Quaker-like simplicity and propriety” in “all her domestic arrangements.”<sup>336</sup> Between 1756 and 1781, Daniel and Rebecca would have eleven children together, one every 2.4 years—only seven would reach adulthood and only two would outlive their father. In their union, Daniel found a happy home and a full hearth, sheltered by the quiet valleys of the Yadkin.

It was during his early years with Rebecca that his inner philosophy met his external typography. Daniel’s new family settled in a rough cabin in a part of the Yadkin that was described as “The Switzerland of North America,” with its “hills gradually swelling into mountains, until the remote portions presented in all directions scenes of wild grandeur and simplicity.”<sup>337</sup> With the land’s ample supply of game and its gift of sublimity, Daniel’s love of the woods grew

bountifully with his love of his family hearth.

Perhaps, it was during this time that Daniel’s visions of the West as a supreme hunting ground transposed into his dreams of Eden—a garden to be harvested and enjoyed yet also revered and honored. In a way, Daniel’s revised view was antithetical to the European notions of economics and Lockean property. Instead, Daniel’s views were singed by romance. They were purely native in origin and exemplified his quixotic blend of red and white culture and philosophy. As his family grew, so also grew his dreams of taking them west. The major difference between Daniel and his fellow frontiersman, however, was that Daniel dreamed of settling the West and not manufacturing a west that was settled. Lyman Draper noted that the borderland of the eighteenth century was a land that contained “a hardy... people,” who were “masters of their own free wills.”<sup>338</sup> Although Daniel often exhibited a free soul, he appeared to believe that his “free will” and resulting property was forever tethered by the illimitable freedom of nature and its pure society. That, no matter the productive action—labour—or work of mankind, they could neither completely own nor settle the wilderness. Like the stars of the heaven or the meandering breeze of Kentucky’s vast valleys, Daniel believed that the *true* wilderness was forever beyond man’s ultimate control.

Such views were adverse to the popular natural philosophy of John Locke and his contemporaries. In chapter five of his 1690 *Second Treatise on Government*, Locke declared:

...labour makes the far greatest part of the value of things we enjoy in this world; and the ground which produces the materials is scarce to be reckoned in as any, or at most, but a very small part of it; so little, that

<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 49.

<sup>334</sup> Lyman Draper interview with Peter Smith, 1863, *Draper Manuscripts* 18S113; Houston, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Daniel Boone*. 36.

<sup>335</sup> Lyman Draper interview with Edward Byram, October 2, 1863, *Draper Manuscripts* 19S170.

<sup>336</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 49.

<sup>337</sup> Reverend F. L. Hanks’ lecture before the New York Historical Society, December 1852.

<sup>338</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 193.



even amongst us, land that is left wholly to nature, that hath no improvement of pasturage, tillage, or planting, is called, as indeed it is, waste; and we shall find the benefit of it amount to little more than nothing.<sup>339</sup>

Locke believed the untilled acres of the American wilderness were “waste” because it is only through productive “labour” that value and enjoyment are instilled within mankind’s affairs. Adam Smith concurred with Locke on the importance of labour, writing, “It was not by gold or by silver, but by labour, that all the wealth of the world was originally purchased.”<sup>340</sup> The late eighteenth century Swiss historian and economist Jean Charles Léonard de Sismondi simplified both Locke’s and Smith’s assertions on labour and property. In his 1815 work, *Political Economy*, Sismondi wrote, “All that man values is created by his industry.”<sup>341</sup>

Like his Native brothers, however, Daniel valued the primordial and untouched wilderness. Although he profited from her bounties, Daniel enjoyed the wooded canopy’s breathless wind and quiet songs, and he valued her still movements and infinite whispers for their own sake. No application of labour separated his enjoyment from the roaring silence of her delights. While the sumptuous bounties of game profited his pockets, by no labour of his own, her intimate pleasures embraced Daniel’s soul. Whether in Penn’s woods or deep within the Western wilderness, Daniel found value in the untouched purity of the woods. Such is

the distinction between the enlightened natural philosophy of western civilization and the rugged and romantic philosophy of nature. While the former concentrates man as the sole instigator and creator of value, enjoyment, and wealth, the latter understands the humble placement of mankind within The Creator’s inextricably complex yet beautiful web of interrelationships. If Daniel’s youth among the Pennsylvania Indians impressed upon his soul a love of the untouched woods, then it was during his time of reflection on the Yadkin’s banks that taught him that the woods were mystic in nature and called for community, not the solitariness of the long hunter. Maybe it was Braddock’s campaign itself that planted this natural seed, a campaign that pinned the height of European civilization against the stature of the natural world and found the former as wanting. Regardless, it was during this time that Daniel’s philosophy was singed by his intimate contact with the Native American.

### *Of Sorrow*

After his triumphal exploration of Kentucky with John Findley in 1769, Daniel resolved to move his family west. For over two years he had explored Kentucky and its many wonders. Although he returned nearly empty handed, he had profited greatly from his many observations of its fertile plains and undulating hillsides. His narrative during the two year interim between his return from Kentucky in May, 1771 and the Boone family’s initial push into Kentucky in early 1773 is nearly silent. One could imagine dreams of his verdurous *Kanta-ke* indubitably occupied and engrossed his thoughtful and restive mind. Some historians suggest that during the cropping seasons he was busy with the family farm, while the remainder of the year found him occupied under the western canopies in search for a

<sup>339</sup> Locke, John. *Second Treatise on Government*. Peter Laslett, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Chapter 5.

<sup>340</sup> Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edwin Cannan, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976. Book 1, Chapter 5.

<sup>341</sup> J.C.L. Simonde de Sismondi, "Political Economy," 1815, Chapter 2

“suitable country for a new settlement.”<sup>342</sup> John Bakeless argued that Daniel spent the majority of 1772 traveling from one Cherokee village to the next, dwelling with them in “wigwams, hunting with braves” and “talking with the chiefs.”<sup>343</sup> Although at rest in his Yadkin wilderness, Daniel’s dreams were restive.

Perhaps during one of these winter adventures in early 1773, Daniel, along with Benjamin Cutbirth and “a few others,” explored central Kentucky and were “greatly pleased with the country.”<sup>344</sup> Daniel dreamed of *Kanta-ke* from his youth amidst Penn’s woods and his impatience was growing. He heard of other pioneering ventures into *Kanta-ke*, led by the McAfee brothers in early June 1773, who were “fired by the glowing description of the beauty and fertility of Kentucky,” and others led by James Harrod.<sup>345</sup> He encountered numerous signs of white settlement, fostered by the Iroquois 1768 treaty of Fort Stanwix, which “relinquished their rights to land between the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers.”<sup>346</sup> Benjamin Franklin himself lobbied London for the “right to buy much of the lands ceded by the Iroquois” to construct a new province called Vandalia.<sup>347</sup> Stirred by the passing opportunity, Daniel returned to his Yadkin farm for the last time in early spring and resolved to pack up his family to make haste for the West.

History is unclear why Rebecca Boone had hitherto been against moving west until now. Perhaps her changed mind was due to their oldest son, James, now be-

ing sixteen and able to provide a hand in the arduous journey. Maybe, perhaps, Daniel’s impassioned accounts of *Kanta-ke* finally affected Rebecca’s deeply romantic soul. John Mason Peck wrote, however, “the wives of our western pioneers are as courageous, and as ready to enter on the line of march to plant the germ of a new settlement as their husbands.”<sup>348</sup> Rebecca’s fiery and strong character may prove truth to the latter, for “the patient, fearless Rebecca was ready now...to follow her man where he chose to go.”<sup>349</sup>

Daniel immediately sold his farm on the Yadkin and prepared to lead the first white settlement west into the wilderness of Kentucky. One may imagine the sheer ecstasy he received from the affair, as from his youth he sought any excuse possible to neglect his tedious farming duties for the freedoms of the woods. On September 25, 1773, Daniel, along with his brother’s family and a party of their close friends, “bade farewell” to the Yadkin and finally turned toward *Kanta-ke*.<sup>350</sup> Lyman Draper highlighted this moment in Daniel’s history as one that displayed the height of the Boone family’s wanderlust. He wrote:

Fifty-six years before, Squire Boone, with his parents, had bid adieu to friends and kindred in England and set sail for the New World; thirty-three years later, Squire Boone with his family, including his son Daniel, set out from Pennsylvania for the Yadkin country; and now, after a lapse of twenty-three years, we find Daniel Boone, true to the instincts of his family, as the head of a little band of poor but fearless, enter-

<sup>342</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 283.

<sup>343</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 67.

<sup>344</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 284; Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 67.

<sup>345</sup> O’Brien, Michael, I. *Irish Pioneers in Kentucky*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.

<sup>346</sup> Brown, *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America*. 54.

<sup>347</sup> Rice, Otis. *Frontier Kentucky*, University Press of Kentucky: Second Edition (July 20, 1993) 7-54.

<sup>348</sup> Peck, “Life of Daniel Boone, The Pioneer of Kentucky.” 21.

<sup>349</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 69.

<sup>350</sup> Houston, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Daniel Boone*. 12.

prising men seeking quiet homes in a distant wilderness.<sup>351</sup>

Daniel's widowed mother accompanied the westward party for half of the day before returning to her home on the Yadkin. Both mother and son knew that such a goodbye was probably their last and one could only imagine the emotion such a moment carried. Daniel was his mother's son, reared equally by her Quaker patience and fortitude as her ancient Welsh romance and emotion. From her he learned to revere life, find joy in the little things, and hear the silent song of the wilderness. In his 1842 letter to his grandson, Daniel's friend and hunting companion Peter Houston remembered the supreme emotion of this moment:

And when a halt was called for a separation they threw their arms around each other's neck and tears flowed freely from all eyes. Even Daniel, in spite of his brave and manly heart was seen to lift the lapel of his pouch to dry the tears from his eyes whilst his dear old mother held around his neck weeping bitterly. Daniel was devoted to her and she loved Daniel above all her children.<sup>352</sup>

Daniel is only recorded to have wept openly on few occasions and their parting spared no tears.

Unlike the comparatively luxurious pioneers of the nineteenth century, who conveyed their family and belongings in covered wagons on trodden and tested roads, Daniel's party followed a mere trace that skirted through the rugged and untamed wilderness. They carried everything their journey and settlement required. Boone historian Michael Lofaro wrote, "Extraordinary difficulties marked their migration," for the

"route was a serpentine hunter's trace that was too narrow for a wagon."<sup>353</sup> Some walked, some rode the packhorses, but all struggled over the three tumultuous mountain ranges of the early west: the Powell's, Walden's, and the Cumberland's. Stephen Aaron described the Trans-Appalachian journey as a true "test of toughness," as "the trip itself, over the steepest mountains and through some of the densest, wettest forests in eastern North America, was arduous."<sup>354</sup> The eager party trekked over the nearby Horton's Summit and Powell's Mountain, passing the Clinch River and its high mountain range. Although laden with goods, women, and children, the party made good time—a hundred miles the first two weeks. Thomas Carter of the Clinch River later remembered the party's passing, recalling the great and "terrible racket" their woman and children caused.<sup>355</sup>

Near the western base of Walden's Ridge, "where Powell's River flows along a lovely vale," the party pitched camp and "awaited the arrival of the rear."<sup>356</sup> Earlier in their journey, Daniel had dispatched his oldest son, James Boone, and a small party of his comrades on a dual mission of both notifying Captain Russell of Castle Woods of their party's western migration and procuring a load of flour for their journey. The small party successfully completed their mission and their fully packed mules were additionally complemented by a small drove of cattle—26 in total and a gift from Captain Russell.<sup>357</sup> The mission was only supposed to consume a day and distance the two groups by no more than a day's journey.

<sup>353</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 41.

<sup>354</sup> Aaron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. 24.

<sup>355</sup> Woods, M.B. Letter to Lyman Draper, April 9, 1883, *Draper Manuscripts* 4C26.

<sup>356</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 285.

<sup>357</sup> Houston, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Daniel Boone*. 12.

<sup>351</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 285.

<sup>352</sup> Houston, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Daniel Boone*. 12.

Young Boone speedily drove the party to meet the main group by the following evening. The night of October 9 overtook them, however, and the small band camped on the “northern bank of Walden’s Creek,” modern day U.S. Highway 68. They were unaware that the main party was a mere three miles ahead of them, and they were “equally unaware that their steps were silently shadowed by a force of Indians.”<sup>358</sup> As the sun rose around them and, as they were “locked in the sweet embrace of balmy sleep,” the unconscious group was ambushed by a group of Delaware and Shawnee Indians. The Mendingall boys were killed immediately—they were the lucky ones. Both James Boone and Henry Russell were shot in the hip, forced to defend themselves from the barrage of tomahawks and knives with only their hands, seizing the naked blades to save their lives. Already dismembered and bleeding profusely, young Boone was tortured by the Natives. They slowly ripped out his finger and toe nails and cut his body piece by piece. The Natives had little time for their proper “burning at the stake, but they did pretty well with their knives” until death, “like an angel of mercy,” came to their captive’s relief.<sup>359</sup> In his last, agonizing moments, James’s cries searched for his mother. His shrieks were of no avail and, at last, his skull was beaten in with tomahawks, his body “slashed to ribbons” and pierced with a multitude of arrows.<sup>360</sup> His death was to serve as more than a deterrent from western settlement; it was also to serve as a poignant warning to all western settlers of the pain and vile horror that waited behind every tree. What was left of their bodies was discovered later that morning by one of Daniel’s party. The

boys’ remains were collected in linen sheets and buried under a log—so as to not be disturbed by wolves. Twenty years later, one of the boy’s bones was found “wedged between two rock ledges” with his “skull split” in two.<sup>361</sup> Dejected and deeply depressed, Daniel sullenly led the party back to the Clinch River and to the safety of their Yadkin Valley. For the moment, Daniel’s dream “slipped from his grasp.”<sup>362</sup>

Henry’s slave was hidden in the nearby bushes during the ambush and witnessed the entirety of this heart-rending scene. He was so impacted by the gruesome episode that he wandered aimlessly in the woods for eleven days before he came to. Later he recounted that, during James’s screams, James pleaded with the Natives that his father was their friend and ally and begged for relief. The sad truth is that the Native that led the barrage was actually a Shawnee brave named Big Jim, whom James was intimately acquainted with. Nathan Boone later remembered that Big Jim often frequented the Boone homestead in North Carolina and spent many nights under their roof as a friend and companion. It is unclear whether Big Jim ever recognized James during the immense havoc or whether the cadaverous and bloodstained campsite spurred him forever on regardless of his past dealings with the Boones. In either case, the bloody episode highlights the strength and direction of the Native mind: they would go to the extreme to protect their hunting ground and, as long as you challenged their way of life, they were going to challenge yours. Daniel Boone never forgot this painful lesson.

<sup>358</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 287, Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 42.

<sup>359</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 71; Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 287.

<sup>360</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 72.

<sup>361</sup> Hagy, James William. “The First Attempt to Settle Kentucky: Boone in Virginia,” *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 53 (July 1979): 227-33.

<sup>362</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 43.

### *A Road in the Wilderness*

Repose and farm labor seemed to plague Daniel's destiny. The winter of 1773-74 is unrecorded in Boone history, although it appears from county records that he wintered his family in David Gass's cabin on the Clinch River. The failed western venture beat him physically, emotionally, and fiscally. Whatever profit he made from selling his farm before the journey was now depleted and his family was without a home. Preserved by contemporary descriptions, one traveler remembered Daniel during this time. He wrote, "Boone was dressed in deer-skin colored black, and had his hair plaited and clubbed up."<sup>363</sup> This description painted Daniel in a rough blend of Anglo-Native cultures, with the deerskin colored black like the Native mixed with the plaited hairstyle popular in Europe. For the moment, Daniel's appearance was his attitude.

Although most of the party returned to their homes or families on the Yadkin, Daniel appeared to never have ventured east of the Clinch. Perhaps he was afraid that, like the Israelites passing over the river Jordan or Lot's wife turning her gaze once more upon Sodom, if he returned east to the Yadkin, he would never return to his *Kantake*. In the spring, Daniel alone ventured back to the Powell Valley to visit the grave of his son. Pushing aside the logs, he uncovered James's blond hair and soft qualities, the blood still evident and crusted on his mutilated features. The trembling father removed the pieces of his son from the rough grave and dug it deeper, applying the log covering back in its original place. About that time a great storm rumbled the heavens and,

during its continuance, from the melancholy associations and gloominess of the place, mingled with the dismal howlings of the storm, Boone felt

more dejected, as he used afterwards to relate, than he ever did in all his life.<sup>364</sup>

Perhaps, Daniel felt alone for the first time in his life, his external environment echoing his internal pain. In the past, the wilderness provided solitude, solace, and an outlet for his soul. That night, as the rain poured heavily upon his fireless camp and the thunder boomed throughout the wooded canopy, Daniel remembered only her pain and suffering.

The following year brought hope into Daniel's darkness. In March 1775 the Watauga Treaty—also known as the Sycamore Shoals Treaty—between the Transylvania Land Company and the Cherokee Indians, wherein Daniel himself drew the boundaries of Kentucky, was signed.<sup>365</sup> The Cherokee alone held "colorable claims" in Kentucky, as the Iroquois had relinquished their claims of the Ohio Valley in their 1768 Treaty of Fort Stanwix and the Shawnee relinquished their claims in the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774.<sup>366</sup> The American pioneer and merchant Richard Henderson dreamed up the treaty's particulars. In his early twentieth century account, *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indians Experiences, Transylvania Days, and Revolutionary Annals*, George W. Ranck described Henderson as "rather showy," although a man of "genuine ability and culture."<sup>367</sup> Henderson headed the negotiations in present day Elizabethton, Tennessee, which was "familiar to the Indians, in a valley that has long been known for its

---

<sup>364</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 304.

<sup>365</sup> Houston, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Daniel Boone*. 13.

<sup>366</sup> Brown, *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America*. 68.

<sup>367</sup> Ranck, George Washington. *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days, and Revolutionary Annals*. Louisville: John P. Morton & Company, 1901. 4.

---

<sup>363</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 74-75.

fertility and beauty.”<sup>368</sup> The contract supplied money and goods—£10,000—to the Cherokee Indians in return for most of present day Kentucky and Tennessee—a total of twenty million acres.

Atticulaculla, considered as “the Solon of his day,” headed the Cherokee’s negotiations. Nicknamed *Little Carpenter*, Atticulaculla, like “a white carpenter,” could “make every notch and joint fit in wood, so he could bring all his views to fill and fit their places in the political machinery of his nation.”<sup>369</sup> Henderson’s plan was to establish a fourteenth colony—a land for the hardworking and brave poor—charging perpetual rent and preserving his rights within the government. An audacious land grab, Henderson’s plan required extreme secrecy. As North Carolinian Governor Josiah Martin later wrote, it was “daring, unjust, and unwarranted,” let alone “illicit and fraudulent,” as Kentucky already belonged to the Earl of Granville.<sup>370</sup> If made public, the plan would fall under the scrutiny of colonial officials and become open to rivals. Such secrecy was not uncommon in the early American West, however. George Washington himself wrote to his land agent in the Ohio valley to conduct their “operation... under the guise of hunting game.”<sup>371</sup> Albeit, in his January 1775 letter to Andrew Miller, the deputy auditor of North Carolina Archibald Neilson inquired, “Pray is Dick Henderson out of his head?”<sup>372</sup>

It is unclear whether Daniel supported the treaty, although one could imagine that his colorful descriptions of Kentucky

molded Henderson’s visions into reality. Regardless, the great hunter’s limited presence at the negotiations was advantageous due to his intimate relations with the Overhill Indians. They seemed to trust him and he trusted them. Although indirect, the treaty’s *illicit* peace with the Cherokee and the *fraudulent* financial backing of Henderson’s company provided a great lift to Daniel’s failed dreams. With Henderson, Daniel obtained the means necessary to finally migrate his family into his *Kanta-ke*. Perhaps the most telling answer is Daniel’s absence from the majority of the negotiations. Before the treaty discussions commenced, Daniel had already procured a body of fellow woodsmen near Long Island on the Holston River to settle *Kanta-ke*. Leaving his brother Squire in charge of their ready band, Daniel ran off to Watauga to attend the treaty’s preliminary negotiations.

Although many Cherokee leaders favored the treaty, a true consensus was never reached. Most of the tribes present at the negotiation hunted the lands they ceded but their towns were “at some distance from Henderson’s proposed colony and ideally would remain so.”<sup>373</sup> The famous Cherokee diplomat Oconostata prophesied:

This is but the beginning...the invader has crossed the great sea in ships; he has not been stayed by broad rivers, and now he has penetrated the wilderness and overcome the ruggedness of the mountains. Neither will he stop here. He will force the Indian steadily before him across the Mississippi ever towards the west...till the red man be no longer a roamer of the forests and a pursuer of wild game.<sup>374</sup>

<sup>368</sup> Ranck, *Boonesborough*. 7.

<sup>369</sup> Walker, *Felix Walker’s Narrative*. 2.

<sup>370</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 84.

<sup>371</sup> Washington, George, “The Creative Forces in Westward Expansion: Henderson and Boone,” *American Historical Review*, 20 (October 1914): 100.

<sup>372</sup> Henderson, Archibald. *The Star of Empire: Phases of the Western Movement in the Old Southwest*. Durham: The Seeman Printery, 1919. 54.

<sup>373</sup> Aaron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. 35.

<sup>374</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 87.

It was Dragging Canoe's foreboding foresight, however, that history has most remembered. Taking Daniel by the hand, he declared, "Brother, we have given you a fine land, but I believe you will have much trouble settling it." Before storming out of the conference in protest, Dragging Canoe peered deep into his brother's eyes and took Daniel aside, warning that "there [is] a dark cloud over that country."<sup>375</sup> No white man at Watauga knew the infinite and immediate depth of Dragging Canoe's premonition. Undaunted by his brother's warnings and driven forever by his deep wanderlust, however, Daniel steadied his gaze upon his *Kanta-ke* and rendezvoused with his band on the Holston. Historian George W. Ranck concluded that Daniel kept his family near the Warrior's Path because he never gave up his vision of settling Kentucky. On March 17, 1775, without a harmonious Cherokee blessing or Daniel in attendance, Henderson concluded the treaty negotiations, his anxious woodsman already seven days into *Kanta-ke*.

By the tenth of March 1775, the ring of axes filled the western forest. The building of the Wilderness Road had begun. Its purpose was to cut a rough road to the Kentucky River through the trackless wilderness to alleviate the supreme burdens of familial transportation and settlement into the West. It would run from the Holston Valley in Tennessee to future Boonesborough in central Kentucky. Fellow axeman and hunter Felix Walker later remembered, "By general consent," we "put ourselves under the management and control of Col. Boon, who was to be our pilot and conductor through the wilderness."<sup>376</sup> Daniel's band of 30 hardened men blazed through

Powell's Valley—passing James Boone's log grave—and on through the Cumberland Gap with relative ease. Once they reached Daniel's old Warrior's Path, they set out to enlarge the ancient trace for a near 50-mile stint, "threading" the "sublime defile" that later became known as Boone's Gap.<sup>377</sup> They then passed through Hazel Patch, turning west toward the Rockcastle River. Felix Walker remembered:

On leaving [Rockcastle River], we had to encounter and cut our way through a country of about twenty miles, entirely covered with dead brush, which we found a difficult and laborious task.<sup>378</sup>

A mere three weeks after they left the Holston, the party erupted from the dense cane and beheld the "pleasing and rapturous appearance of the plains of Kentucky," remembered Walker.<sup>379</sup> Entirely captivated, Walker wrote in his narrative:

So rich a soil we had never seen before; covered with clover in full bloom, the woods were abounding with wild game—turkeys so numerous that it might be said they appeared but one flock, universally scattered in the woods. It appeared that nature, in the profusion of her bounty, had spread a feast for all that lives, both for the animal and rational world. A sight so delightful to our view and grateful to our feelings, almost inclined us, in imitation of Columbus, in transport to kiss the soil of Kentucky, as he hailed and saluted the sand on his first setting his foot on the shores of America.<sup>380</sup>

---

<sup>375</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 87; Haywood, John. *The Civil and Political History of the State of Tennessee* (Knoxville: Heiskell and Brosn, 1803), 58-59.

<sup>376</sup> Walker, *Felix Walker's Narrative*. 3.

---

<sup>377</sup> Ranck, *Boonesborough*. 10.

<sup>378</sup> Walker, *Felix Walker's Narrative*. 3.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

Although *Kanta-ke*'s beauty and sumptuous bounty blessed Daniel before, one could imagine the sheer delight and ecstasy this moment produced in his soul. Never before had *Kanta-ke*'s supreme sublimity enveloped him with such hope, peace, and community. For the first time in his life, Daniel's purpose changed and his compass altered: he was not on one of his long hunts and his trap line did not govern his path. Rather, his purpose was to bring his family west and his compass duly pointed toward the setting sun. However, "man may appoint, but One greater than men can disappoint," remembered Felix Walker.<sup>381</sup>

It was March 24, 1775. The undisturbed party was within 15 miles of their destination, near the "mouth of one of [the Kentucky River's] tributary streams, which is known even then as Otter Creek."<sup>382</sup> Amidst the undulating countryside of modern day Richmond, Kentucky, the company camped for the night. As their fire receded with the darkness, "a volley from the woods" interrupted the party's slumber.<sup>383</sup> The confusion erupted the dawn's silence, with tomahawks and lead piercing Kentucky's crisp morning air. Daniel's brother Squire seized his coat in place of his powder horn and Daniel himself scrambled half-naked around the campsite. One man fell headlong into the campfire after his head was pierced with lead. Captain Twitty was shot through both knees and Felix Walker was badly wounded. As spirited and vigorous as the phantoms attacked, they receded into the darkness. Panting and panicked, the party stood still on the bloody ground and waited for a resurgent attack. Silence fell upon them as though an icy winter blanket. The shock-warfare of the immediate attack frayed the party's nerves and tore their bodies. Most importantly, it destroyed their

budding hope and caused some to return home to North Carolina.

For Daniel, the attack must have presented before him the same dismay and horror that the one less than two years prior caused when Indians killed his son on Walden's Creek. Additionally, just as his friend and ally Big Jim had conducted the previous massacre, it is believed that Dragging Canoe himself led this assault, "hoping to scare off pioneers before they became entrenched."<sup>384</sup> Both attacks were not at random and taught Daniel that, although he had communed and befriended the Native, nothing would stop their naturally hungry defense of their land. Felix Walker remembered, "Hope vanished from most of us, and left us suspended in the tumult of uncertainty and conjecture."<sup>385</sup> After a number of days, Twitty passed although Daniel worked hard to heal his wounds with the wooded medicinals he learned from his youth among Penn's Natives.

Pushing forward, the reduced party transported Felix Walker the remaining 15 miles on a litter to the banks of the Kentucky River—30 miles distant of modern-day Lexington. On April 5, 1755, the work was at last finished—the prophecy of the Wilderness Road was realized—and the tired party arrived at their destination. The very next day, Daniel's party was "hard at work at Boonesborough."<sup>386</sup> Richard Henderson understood that everything now "depended in Boone's maintaining his ground—at least until [reinforcements] could get there." Felix Walker credited Daniel's "firmness" and "fortitude" for their station's success, writing, "Colonel Boone conducted the company under his care through the

<sup>381</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>382</sup> Ranck, *Boonesborough*. 9.

<sup>383</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 91.

<sup>384</sup> Aaron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. 37; Arnow, Harriette Simpson, *Seedtime on the Cumberland*. New York, 1960, 172-202.

<sup>385</sup> Walker, *Felix Walker's Narrative*. 6.

<sup>386</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 93.



wilderness, with great propriety, intrepidity and courage.”<sup>387</sup> Daniel’s determination and fortitude was crucial to the settlement’s early success.

On April 18, however, Henderson arrived at Boone’s station, disgusted at the progress of the fort. Although Daniel led a successful venture into the wilderness, he and his men were so enamored with Kentucky and its many bounties that they had spent little time surveying or building the fort’s defenses. Henderson quickly took charge and moved the fort’s location “a little farther up the river bank.”<sup>388</sup> Although he displayed an external commanding front, he privately rebuke his “damned recruits,” who he described as a “set of scoundrels who scarcely believe in God or fear the devil.”<sup>389</sup> Henderson’s chosen location was “much higher” than Daniel’s original campsite and was perched on the Kentucky River’s plateau, overlooking the many sycamores of the fertile bottomland. Early nineteenth century western historian John Mason Peck remembered the construction of the fort, writing:

[it] was built in the form of a parallelogram, and was about two hundred and fifty feet broad. Houses of hewn logs, built in a square form, projected from each corner, adjoining which were stockades for a short distance; and the remaining space on the four sides, except the gateways, was filled up with cabins, erected of rough logs, placed close together, which made a sure defense. The

gates, or doorways, were on opposite sides, constructed of slabs of timber, split several inches in thickness, and hung with stout wooden hinges.<sup>390</sup>

Daniel’s inability—or lack of desire—in leading the fort’s construction speaks to his nature as a woodsman and quasi-Indian. He held little interest in the production of civilization. The fort’s—or *Borough’s*—construction was attributed to “Boone’s confidence in [the people] and [theirs] in him,” although internally, Daniel had little interest in the fort’s erection.<sup>391</sup> In his *Narrative*, Felix Walker wrote, the fact that “no person did actually command entirely” impressed one Boonesborough visitor in 1775 as “all anarchy and confusion.”<sup>392</sup> From all accounts, although Richard Henderson attempted to lead and build the fort, it was Daniel’s character, expertise, and position among his fellow frontiersman that molded the fort’s many parts into a stable community.

By June 13, 1775, Boonesborough was ready for more settlers, although John C. Abbott maintained it was not until the following day.<sup>393</sup> Daniel was in a hurry to bring his beloved Rebecca and their seven children into Kentucky, although the previous day—June 12, 1775—Henderson wrote in a personal letter that Boonesborough was no place for “growing family.”<sup>394</sup> Daniel infused his family with his wanderlust, courage, and love of the untamed west and they, like him, longed for its embrace. Henderson’s opinion aside, the Boones were finally

<sup>387</sup> Walker, *Felix Walker’s Narrative*. 7.

<sup>388</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 99.

<sup>389</sup> Henderson, Richard. “Judge Richard Henderson’s Journal of a Trip to ‘Cantuckey’ and of Events at Boonesborough in 1775,” in Ranck, George Washington, *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days, and Revolutionary Annals*. Louisville: John P. Morton & Company, 1901. 173.

<sup>390</sup> Peck, “Life of Daniel Boone, The Pioneer of Kentucky.” 27-28.

<sup>391</sup> Ranck, *Boonesborough*. 21.

<sup>392</sup> Walker, *Felix Walker’s Narrative*. 163.

<sup>393</sup> Abbott, *Daniel Boone: The Pioneer of Kentucky*. 127.

<sup>394</sup> Henderson, Richard. “Letter of Judge Henderson (June 12, 1775) to Proprietors Remaining in North Carolina,” in *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days, and Revolutionary Annals*, by George Washington Ranck, 189.

moving west. After a sublime autumnal journey, the united family concluded their 500-mile tour of the true wilderness—hundreds of miles beyond the line of Anglo-American settlement—and arrived at Boonesborough at the beginning of September, although Daniel’s newest son, William Boone, died shortly after his June 20 birth. For the first time, Rebecca saw the land that Daniel had spent years courting. Although a tough and tried frontiersman’s wife, she had yet to behold the true frontier. Her thoughts upon reaching Daniel’s *Kantake* and its fertile rivers and plains are beyond estimation. Perhaps, by journey’s end, *Kantake*’s serene beauty and peaceful sublimity quelled all envy and pain that Daniel’s extended absences had produced in her over the many years. Such were the effects of the Promised Land.

### ‘Salt and Sheltowee’

After every sunrise there comes the sunset and, true to form, Boonesborough experienced many a dark night. By the end of 1777, the racked and starved fort was devoid of hope and its precious salt. Geographic isolation mixed with continuous Native barrages compounded the settlers’ already infinite difficulties, raping their fields of precious corn and staying their hunters’ attention on the defense. Hundreds of miles past the defined line of white settlement the exposed station subsisted on its dangerous harvest of wild meat, papaws, grapes, and forest nuts. What little food they had was not only “insipid,” but “sickness was threatened.”<sup>395</sup> Modern historian John Mack Faragher described that, by years end,

[their] food supply was so low that some of the women followed the cattle around, watching to see what they ate, then boiled the same greens

with a piece of salt pork for their families.<sup>396</sup>

Colonel Bowman described in his plea to General Edward Hand of Fort Pitt that, because the Natives “burned all” their “corn” that fall, “many of the families are left desolate...[as] we have no more than two months bread” and “necessity has obliged many of our young men to go to the Monongahale for clothing.” Bowman continued in true frontiersman fashion, writing, “We must at any rate suffer.”<sup>397</sup> One of his rangers later attested that “he was allowed but one single pint of Corn per day, and that he had to grind it himself of a hand mill...[for] there was nothing else.”<sup>398</sup> The garrisons were also devoid of meat and, as Daniel’s letter to the Virginian authorities conveyed, the settlers were “destitute of the necessary article of salt.”<sup>399</sup> Salt was more than a staple on the frontier; it was the difference between life and death. It was required for “curing the provisions of the garrison,” providing security and a valuable extension in their food supply.<sup>400</sup> Without salt, the settlers were required to hunt nearly every day, exposing themselves and the fort to imminent danger.

The crises reached its height on New Year’s Day, 1778, when Daniel agreed to lead a small expedition of about 30 men to

<sup>396</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 153.

<sup>397</sup> Bowman, John. “Col. John Bowman to General Edward Hand, December 12, 1777,” in *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio, 1777-1778*, Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds., Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1912. 183.

<sup>398</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 153.

<sup>399</sup> Boone, Daniel. “Petition to the Virginia General Assembly, endorsed November 25, 1777” in *Petitions of the Early Inhabitants of Kentucky to the General Assembly of Virginia, 1769-1792*. James Rood Robertson, ed., (Louisville, Kentucky: John P Morton, 1914), 43.

<sup>400</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 154.

<sup>395</sup> Ranck, *Boonesborough*. 63.

the Licking River's lower salt springs. It was a truly bold endeavor, for the fort was under the continually watchful eye of the Natives, who "would fall upon them" at any moment "with great ferocity."<sup>401</sup> Laden with large iron kettles to assist the turning of the spring's brine into salt, the small party departed for the Lower Blue Licks on January 8, 1778. The men worked the spring at a grueling pace in the wretched winter weather, converting 800 gallons of brine into one bushel of pure salt.<sup>402</sup> After four weeks, the team sourced several hundred bushels and "dispatched about half of it to the [fort]."<sup>403</sup> Salt making was more than arduous it was highly dangerous. All life in the forest revolved around the salt licks, either for nutrition or for hunting. Such wilderness rest stops formed the foundation of the wilderness's food chain. Most all game was concentrated around the licks, drawing the white and red hunter alike. Daniel understood that the Natives often frequented the licks, not for the profit of game but of white scalps and so he steadily employed watch parties on the their outer perimeter. Although this ultimately tempered the party's bounty, Daniel thought it prudent. Most all of Boonesborough's able men were concentrated at the lick, leaving their woman and children highly exposed and without defense. If his men were killed, Boonesborough would share the same fate.

Early on Saturday morning, February 7, however, as Daniel was out hunting alone, a party of four braves caught his tracks and soon fell upon him. He immediately tried to cut his nearly 400-pound load of buffalo and escape on his horse, but his knife was frozen

in its scabbard. He never cleaned the blood and grease from the blade and it succumbed to the Kentucky frost. After this failed attempt, the braves were nearly at his throat and "an animated chase commenced."<sup>404</sup> After about a mile, with "bullets [singing] about his ears," Daniel surrendered. One of the bullets had cut loose the strap of his powder horn—he was without defense and twice the age of the young and agile braves. Daniel also knew both the passions and abilities of the Natives and understood the next shot would be "aimed to kill."<sup>405</sup> Suspending his tracks, he hid behind a tree and stood his rifle on the opposite side to signal his submission. Once upon him, the braves laughed naïvely, as they immediately recognized the famous hunter and the true victory of their chase.

The braves led their prized catch to their camp near the ancient war trace on Hinkston's Creek. Daniel's eyes were amazed. In the "sheltered part of the valley blazed a fire thirty or forty feet long, and around it sat a party of more than a hundred Shawnee warriors, fully armed."<sup>406</sup> Among the warriors Daniel recognized British regulars, masked by their native façade. All faces, red or white, were painted for war. Daniel immediately discerned that the great party's compass pointed towards Boonesborough and connected that such a party would quickly overwhelm its weak ramparts and inhabitants in a matter of minutes. Boonesborough's fortifications were reportedly in great despair and their people starving, weak, and entirely without defense, as most all of its able men were absent from the fort making salt. Attacked, the settlers would be caught off guard, the fort immediately taken, and the captives tortured and killed. Daniel's deep understanding of the Native's customs

---

<sup>401</sup> Abbott, *Daniel Boone: The Pioneer of Kentucky*. 191.

<sup>402</sup> These numbers are taken from Lyman Drapers Manuscripts, wherein he credits the 'respectable authority of Joseph Ficklin, who was a youthful defender of Bryan's Station when attacked in 1782.'

<sup>403</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 155.

---

<sup>404</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 461.

<sup>405</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 160.

<sup>406</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 160.

and habits, however, served to his advantage.

He was led up to the chief, Blackfish—*Cottawamago*—, heir of the great Shawnee chief Cornstalk, who Daniel fought nearly 20 years earlier on Braddock’s campaign. Three months before, on November 10, Cornstalk was murdered by an American soldier while on a mission of peace at Point Pleasant.<sup>407</sup> Blackfish’s mission was to avenge his death and Boonesborough was his target. As Virginian Governor Patrick Henry understood, the British leaders at Detroit also took advantage of Blackfish’s rage, encouraging the chief to attack the American settlements on the frontier in hopes of repressing the now revolutionary American insurgence of the western country. Daniel Boone historian Meredith Mason Brown believed that the British, in assisting the Native’s attacks on American frontiersman, sought to advance three objectives: “to reassert control over the Ohio Valley; to hold onto Canada; and to divert American military forces from the coastal colonies.”<sup>408</sup> London had explicitly directed Lieutenant Governor Henry Hamilton of Fort Detroit to employ Natives “in making a Diversion and exciting an alarm upon the frontiers of Virginia and Pennsylvania.”<sup>409</sup> Hamilton in turn furnished the Natives with guns, ammunition, tomahawks, and war paint—including “eighty pounds of rose pink and five hundred pounds of vermilion.”<sup>410</sup> A Virginian woman who lived in Detroit later remembered that “[Hamilton] did all in his

Power to induce all Nations of Indians to massacre the Frontier Inhabitants...and paid very high prices in Goods for the Scalps.”<sup>411</sup> Hamilton’s efforts succeeded, for, in the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson listed among the “repeated injuries” that King George had brought “upon the Inhabitants of our Frontier, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known Rule of Warfare, is an undistinguished Destruction.” Jefferson’s letter to Hamilton’s superior speaks to the strength of the British’s strategic yet unruly position:

The known rule of warfare with the Indian Savages is an indiscriminate butchery of men women and children ...[Hamilton] associates small parties of whites under his immediate command with large parties of the Savages, & sends them to act, not against our Forts or armies in the field, but farming settlement on our frontiers.<sup>412</sup>

Although coastal warfare dominated the American Revolution’s attention, the British succeeded at sequestering the push of American frontiersman—if only for the moment.

Daniel recognized one Shawnee brave, Captain Will, who captured him nine years before on his first journey into Kentucky, and boldly yelled “How d’ do, Captain Will.”<sup>413</sup> Captain Will was entirely surprised and the situation’s weight relieved. Daniel’s open admittance of Captain Will’s

<sup>407</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 460.

<sup>408</sup> Brown, *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America*. 94.

<sup>409</sup> Lord Germain to Sir Guy Carleton, White Hall, March 26, 1777, sent to Lieutenant Governor Hamilton from Quebec, May 21, 1777, printed in Consul Willshire Butterfield, *History of the Girtys* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co. 1890), 342-344.

<sup>410</sup> Ranck, George Washington. *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days, and Revolutionary Annals*. Louisville: John P. Morton & Company, 1901. 75 n. 1.

<sup>411</sup> “Daniel Sullivan to Colonel John Cannon, Fort Pitt, March 20, 1778” in *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio 1777-1778*, Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise P. Kellogg, eds., Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1912), 231-232.

<sup>412</sup> Jefferson, Thomas. “Letter to William Phillips, July 22, 1779” in *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts*, William R. Palmer, ed., 11 vols. (1875-1893; rpt., New York: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1960-1969), 1:322.

<sup>413</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 162.

previous success tempered the moment, as he knew that the Natives admired him and were “invariably pleased on the rear occasions when they outwitted him.”<sup>414</sup> Lyman Draper described the following scene as “most ludicrous,” as both Daniel and Blackfish displayed “mock friendship and civility ... with all the grace and politeness of which [Daniel] was a master.”<sup>415</sup> After their initial pleasantries, Blackfish inquired if Daniel was associated with the salt-makers at the Blue Licks. Seeing no choice, Daniel admitted his allegiance. Although externally calm, his inner mind racked with stratagem. Daniel knew that, if he could not turn Blackfish’s warriors from their ravenous path, not only would he risk the lives of his 30 men, but the lives of every woman and child in Boonesborough. The Native party outnumbered Daniel’s four to one and surprise weighted their already heavy side. Daniel’s understanding of Native nature taught him that the braves needed victory, although the size of such victory was of little import. Therefore, Daniel employed prudential finesse and told Blackfish that he would surrender his camp at the Blue Licks as long as “they should not be tortured or forced to run the gauntlet.”<sup>416</sup>

The next morning, Daniel led the large Shawnee party to his camp and convinced his men to surrender. Sixty years later, his speech to the Shawnee on behalf of his men was remembered by one of his fellow salt-makers:

Brothers! You have got all the young men; to kill them, as has been suggested, would displease the Great Spirit, and you could not then expect future success in hunting nor war; and if you spare them they will make

you fine warriors, and excellent hunters to kill game for your squaws and children. These young men have done you no harm; they were engaged in a peaceful occupation, and unresistingly surrendered upon my assurance that such a step was the only safe one; I consented to their capitulation on the express condition that they should be made prisoners of war and treated well; I now appeal both to your honor and your humanity; spare them, and the great Spirit will smile upon you.<sup>417</sup>

Hearing Daniel’s pleas, the Shawnee voted on whether to sacrifice or show mercy to their captives. The ballot ruled fifty-nine to sixty-one for mercy. Daniel’s energy, prudence, and sagacity saved the lives of his both his men their families. Lyman Draper wrote, Daniel’s fellow prisoners popularly concluded that, “but for Boone’s influence, they all would have been massacred, Boonesborough taken, and its helpless inmates left at the cold mercy of the conquerors.”<sup>418</sup> Daniel’s plan worked perfectly: the Shawnees’ revenge was quelled and their plans abbreviated without the letting of blood. Boonesborough could live for another day.

On their march back to the Shawnee town of Little Chillicothe, Daniel joked and made friends with many of the braves. He understood that the overall success of his efforts would result only from a long game, played with patience and on the Native’s terms. This game, however, fooled both his red and white brothers and most likely caused suspicion in the latter. The large party reached the camp that night and Daniel found a large group of braves clearing a pathway in the snow. Although Blackfish promised to not torture Daniel’s men, he never promised to spare their leader. Daniel

---

<sup>414</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 163.

<sup>415</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 463.

<sup>416</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 164.

<sup>417</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 465.

<sup>418</sup> Draper, *The Life of Daniel Boone*. 465.

anticipated such a test, knowing that, to gain the trust of the Shawnee chief, a test of strength and resolve was necessary.

Such a test was to be found in the rigor of the *gauntlet*. This was a standard practice among many of the Ohio Valley Indian tribes, derived either directly or indirectly from the Ancient Roman practice of *Xylokopia* or *Fustuarium*, a form of physical punishment where the captive is forced down a gauntlet of his peers to be repeatedly beaten with heavy clubs, whips, or anything worth its weight from both sides—sometimes to the death. The early Hellenistic Greek historian Polybius wrote of such a Roman Gauntlet in his work, *The Histories*:

The tribune takes a cudgel and just touches the condemned man with it, after which all in the camp beat or stone him, in most cases dispatching him in the camp itself. But even those who manage to escape are not saved thereby: impossible! For they are not allowed to return to their homes, and none of the family would dare to receive such a man in his house. So that those who have of course fallen into this misfortune are utterly ruined.<sup>419</sup>

For the Shawnee Indians, however, it appears that the purpose of the gauntlet was to test the strength and vigor—or resolve—of their captives. It was to sort the weak from the strong.

Stripped of his shirt, Daniel lined up to run the gauntlet on that cold February night, his men watching fearfully from the side. His many years among the Natives taught him that one deviation in honor would separate his life from him, no matter his captors' respect of his abilities. Staring down the gauntlet, he knew that one step would determine his fate, proving either

dignity and honor or death. Most captives hesitated, forcing a concentrated beating and eventual, yet slow, death. The lives of his men and his family—of Boonesborough itself—were on the line. Daniel would accept nothing but dignity and life. Down the dark corridor of over one hundred thirsty braves he would solidify his honor, attain Blackfish's respect, and save Boonesborough. His body burning from the cold, the focal captive erupted from the starting line. With backbreaking speed, Daniel zig-zagged back and forth, parleying each blow with a separating movement. When one brave stood in his path, intent on delivering the final blow to end the affair, Daniel, as though a bull charging his prey, "butted him in the chest with his head," knocking the large brave backwards.<sup>420</sup> Victorious, the bloody captive beat the gauntlet.

About a month later, on March 10, Blackfish took the prisoners to Detroit, to collect his pay from the British, "who had encouraged them to go on the warpath."<sup>421</sup> Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton received the Shawnee captives, pitying their helpless state. Immediately, the British commander recognized Daniel and offered a hundred pounds to ransom him. In his letter to his commanding officer, Governor Hamilton wrote to Sir Guy Carleton on April 5, 1777, "These Shawanese delivered up four of their prisoners to me; but took Boone with them expecting by his means to affect something."<sup>422</sup> Blackfish was unmoved by Hamilton's sum, for his plan for Daniel was more important than English silver: Daniel was the key to taking Boonesborough and Boonesborough was the key to taking back the Ohio Valley. Blackfish understood that, if he "could lay [Boonesborough] in ashes, making it the funeral pyre of all its inmates," the "weaker forts" of the Ohio Valley would

<sup>420</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 169.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>422</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 89.

<sup>419</sup> *The Histories* 6. 37. 1-4 Loeb ed., 3:353.

be “immediately abandoned by their garrisons in despair.”<sup>423</sup> Simply, Daniel was the key to Boonesborough and Boonesborough was the key to the West. During his time in Detroit, however, Daniel once again played the long game and was careful to leave hints that Kentucky was “not irrevocably wedded to the American cause,” securing a healthy relationship with his British hosts.<sup>424</sup> Daniel’s prudence once again tricked all parties of his allegiance, and caused increased speculation by his men.

As soon as Blackfish returned to Little Chillicothe, he began the adoption ceremonies of many of Daniel’s men. Daniel was himself transformed from a Captain in the Virginia militia to Sheltowee—meaning *Big Turtle*—a Shawnee warrior. Blackfish himself adopted Sheltowee into his family and treated him as blood of his blood. In fact, it is believed that Daniel killed Blackfish’s son one-year prior in a captive rescue mission. This honorable hospitality was unique and unexpected, as John C. Abbott concluded, “The Indians seem to have had great respect for Boone.” Abbott continued, “Even with them [Daniel] had acquired the reputation of being a just and humane man, while his extraordinary abilities, both as a hunter and a warrior, had won their admiration.”<sup>425</sup> His character was silent but admirable; pensive but courageously formidable. Blackfish hoped in his full acculturation, perhaps even hopeful of a future chief. In Sheltowee, Blackfish saw a warrior and a brother; a leader and a son.

The ceremonies, although painful due to the plucking of hair and extreme washing, yielded a fine-tuned brave, painted and clothed in true Native fashion. Sheltowee could scarcely be distinguished from his

Native brothers. Both Blackfish and his squaw treated him with respect and “addressed him as son,” making no “distinction between him and their two real children.”<sup>426</sup>

Over the course of the next four months, Sheltowee lived, hunted, and communed with his “self-constituted Shawnee kinsmen.”<sup>427</sup> Among Penn’s woods, Daniel early learned the Algonquian language of the Delaware, which he invariably used among their grand-nation, the Shawnee.<sup>428</sup> Sheltowee’s kinship with his Shawnee brother was so great that many years later his granddaughter met an old Shawnee woman at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, who “beamed when she heard that the white woman talking to her was” Sheltowee’s kin. The old woman was one of Blackfish’s daughters—Sheltowee’s adopted sisters—and she remembered the great kindness Sheltowee had shown her half a century before.<sup>429</sup>

Daniel’s acculturation was so complete that “suspicions about his loyalty continued among some of the other adopted salt boilers.”<sup>430</sup> Although long, his own “autobiography” speaks well of his time amongst the Ohio Indians:

I became a son, and had a great share in the affection of my new parents, brothers, sisters, and friends. I was exceedingly familiar and friendly with them, always appearing as cheerful and satisfied as possible, and they put great confidence in me. ...The Shawanese king took great notice of me, and treated me with profound respect, and entire friendship, often entrusting me to hunt at

<sup>423</sup> Abbott, *Daniel Boone: The Pioneer of Kentucky*. 192.

<sup>424</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 173; Ranck, *Boonesborough*. 68.

<sup>425</sup> Abbott, *Daniel Boone: The Pioneer of Kentucky*. 193.

<sup>426</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 178.

<sup>427</sup> Ranck, *Boonesborough*. 68.

<sup>428</sup> Trowbridge, Charles Christopher. *Shawnese Traditions*. Ann Arbor: *University of Michigan Press*, 1939. 9, 55, 67.

<sup>429</sup> Draper, Lyman. *Draper Manuscripts*, 6S228, 16C28.

<sup>430</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 92.

my liberty. I frequently returned with the spoils of the woods, and as often presented some of what I had take to him, expressive of duty to my sovereign.<sup>431</sup>

In every sense, the letter on Patrick Henry's desk was correct: Daniel Boone was dead, for Sheltowee had killed him.

### *The Revenant*

The summer of 1778 brings new life to this narrative. In early June, Sheltowee "scented the impending danger" of Blackfish's imminent plan on taking Boonesborough and learned that he intended to use his adopted son as guide and translator, maybe, perhaps, he even hoped Sheltowee would convince the fort to surrender. Amassed in the Old Chillicothe town, Sheltowee witnessed over 450 braves, painted and dressed for war. If Boonesborough was to be saved; if he was to ever escape, now was the only chance. His decision was already made, for, over the past few months, Sheltowee had secretly stockpiled loads of ammunition and flint for just an occasion.<sup>432</sup> Sheltowee's long game among the Shawnee provided time for Boonesborough to prepare its defenses, although the stabilizing and courageous presence of their leader would prove a profound addition. While his fellow braves were out on a bear hunt, near modern day Xenia, Ohio, he stayed back with the squaws and children, attending the fire and camp gear. After he heard the report of rifles, proving the braves' distance from their camp, he unleashed his horse and rode south to Boonesborough.

Daniel rode hard through the night, using the "bed of running streams to obliterate his tracks."<sup>433</sup> The 43-year-old woodsman knew that at any moment a party of 450 young, fit, ready, and vengeful braves would be upon him. About ten o'clock the next morning his horse gave out, unable to continue. Not losing a moment, Daniel quickly dismounted and continued on foot, breaking his path by following fallen trees. Driven by his true self, Daniel covered the expanse of 160 miles in less than four days, "eating only one meal besides his jerked venison."<sup>434</sup> Forging the Ohio was no simple task, although it provided a great break of his trail and detached his pursuers in both distance and trajectory. John Bakeless concluded, "[Daniel's] journey was an amazing record of endurance and self-reliance." Although Bakeless's conclusion is not altogether untrue, Daniel's escape and following odyssey attests to more than Daniel's strength and character. It shows his true soul: one that is supreme in its patience, statesmanlike in its prudence, manic in its passions, and feverishly devoted to his family.

Deeply fatigued and "bedraggled," Daniel "limped" into Boonesborough, whose population "greeted him as one just risen from the dead."<sup>435</sup> Although the fugitive's return was surrounded with great elation, Daniel found his family's cabin empty. Rebecca had taken their family back east to her father's cabin on the Yadkin when the fort presumed Daniel was dead. Analogous to the romantic Greek poem of Odysseus and his return to Ithaca, wherein his dog Argos alone recognized him, Daniel received an "unexpected greeting" by his family's old cat, "which had not been found

---

<sup>431</sup> Boone, Daniel. *The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone, Formerly a Hunter; Containing a Narrative of the Wars of Kentucky, as Given by Himself*. 13.

<sup>432</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 91.

---

<sup>433</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 183.

<sup>434</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 183.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*, 184; Ranck, *Boonesborough*. 69.



since Rebecca and the children went back to the settlements.”<sup>436</sup>

Standing in his empty doorway, he felt dejected and entirely alone. His tired eyes stared at the “rough logs, the cold, blackened fireplace, the empty pegs” and found that, although he had saved both Boonesborough and the majority of his 30 men, he had lost his family.<sup>437</sup> Worst of all, after he risked his life to save Boonesborough the previous winter and then successfully defended it from Blackfish’s siege in the coming weeks, he was then court-martialed as a traitor due to his time among the British at Fort Detroit and Shawnee at Little Chillicothe. Although Daniel won the trial—in fact, he was so exonerated that they promoted him to the rank of major—his next journey was the most important of his life.<sup>438</sup> Hitherto, Daniel pushed forever west—forever curiously seeking what lay beyond the next cliff, the next bluff. From his youth he dreamed of the pure west, steadied his compass forever toward its sublime sunsets, and incessantly longed for the many mysteries of the lands beyond the mountains. Now was the moment of his life—the moment that readied his destiny. In December 1779 he departed the station that bore his name. He went *east*; *east* to the Yadkin; *east* to be with his family.

## CHAPTER SIX Conclusions – With *His Mind*

### *The Elusive Myth-Hero*

The picture of Daniel Boone is as elusive as the wilderness he chased. Although often considered a representative American man, Daniel’s world was the wilderness forever beyond Anglo settlement and his genius was found under its complex, “part Indian, part white” but “mostly natural” canopy.<sup>439</sup> Daniel often claimed that he had never been lost in the woods—he did admit to being momentarily befuddled on one occasion—yet he was entirely adrift when he came out of it. Robert Morgan noted, “He was at home with trees around him, and animals and stars, and Indians.” Where he lost his way, however, was “where the trace became a turnpike, the trail became a street.”<sup>440</sup> After reuniting with his family in 1778, Daniel spent the majority of the next 15 years in the East. He tried his hand in politics, business, law, land speculation, and surveying. He failed in every endeavor and slowly divorced himself from society. Frontier historian Arthur K. Moore observed that, although pioneer heroes such as Daniel Boone were the pivotal characters on the frontier’s dynamic stage, once the wilderness and its natural inhabitants receded, so also receded civilization’s need for its former champions.

Daniel’s elusive portrait is also plagued with irony and his destiny was self-defeating, as the more it was realized the more barren it became. Daniel’s deep love for the untouched wilderness paved a navigable path for civilization to follow. By 1799, the irony of Daniel’s life was plain to him. More than any other single man, Daniel, who sought to peacefully enjoy the

---

<sup>436</sup> Lofaro, *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. 94.

<sup>437</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 185.

<sup>438</sup> Ranck, George Washington. *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days, and Revolutionary Annals*. Louisville: John P. Morton & Company, 1901. 105.

---

<sup>439</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 347.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, 347.

boundless bounties of the West, had created a world that repelled his position and razed the foundation of his soul. He was a man who loved the wilderness for its own sake and who found extreme delight in its simple purity, yet he led civilization to destroy it. Robert Morgan concluded:

From the Blue Ridge to the Bluegrass, from the Yadkin to the Yellowstone, no man sought and loved the wilderness with more passion and dedication. Yet none did more to lead settlers and developers to destroy that wilderness in a few short decades. ...Few white men of his time came close to understanding and appreciating the Native Americans as well as Boone did, yet few did as much, ultimately, to displace the Indians and destroy their habitat and culture.<sup>441</sup>

His *Kanta-ke* was lost; the beavers, deer, bears, turkeys, buffalo, and the Native had been “replaced by lawyers and politicians and crooks.”<sup>442</sup> Although Daniel zealously sought the many mysteries of the West and forever lived according to the silent melody of its undulating rivers and mountains, of its infinite prairies and canopies, the budding American republic found in Daniel an “icon of curiosity, courage, character, and wonder” and not the deeply philosophical, Indian-like, solitude loving, and peaceful woodsman of the wilderness.<sup>443</sup> Richard Slotkin believed that it was the “figure of Daniel Boone” and not Daniel Boone himself “that became the most significant, most emotionally compelling myth-hero of the early republic.”<sup>444</sup> This slight distinction in terms begets considerable consequences. Slotkin described this “myth-hero” as a

“lover of the spirit of the wilderness,” although his “acts of love and sacred affirmation” are instead viewed as “acts of violence against that spirit and her avatars.”<sup>445</sup> American men would use this simple woodsman’s legend to encourage militant national expansion, manifest destiny, and the Western removal of the Natives from their lands. Simply, the message of the *man*—his received genius, the emotive force of his actions, the *legend* of the frontier—precipitates far more for history than the nature and substance of the man’s life, purpose, and spirit.

The legend of Daniel Boone as the American myth-hero is perhaps best understood in the aftermath of the Battle of New Orleans. In his 1815 address on the House floor, just five years before Daniel’s death, Georgia Representative George Troup declared that America’s recent victory over the British was due to its reliance on the western yeoman. He declared:

It was the yeomanry of the country marching to the defense of the City of Orleans, the farmers of the country triumphantly victorious over the conquerors of Europe. I came, I saw, I conquered, says the American Husbandman, fresh from his plough.<sup>446</sup>

Troup praised the natural husband of the American West as the ultimate protector and defender of the American republic. He praised the toil-hardened naturalness of the plough as the ultimate protector of Liberty’s Regime. His phrase, “fresh from his plough,” suggests a connective and intimate relationship between the plough and victory—between a cultivated nature and America’s triumph. In Charles A. Goodrich’s *History of the United States of America*,

<sup>441</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 429-430.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 369.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>444</sup> Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. 21.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>446</sup> Georgian House of Representative Mr. Troup delivered address on the House Floor, printed by ‘National Intelligencer,’ February 17, 1815.

“the most widely used textbook in America’s secondary schools before the Civil War,” he concluded that the perfect balance of the American yeoman’s “social virtues” amidst their “primitive purity” led to the realization of their success.<sup>447</sup> The American West may not have had the manufactured splendor of society but it possessed a natural compound that the east lacked: pure and unindoctrinated freedom. Therefore, America’s early republic needed a hero and the *legend* of Daniel Boone, America’s pathfinder, wilderness-tamer, and Indian-killer fit the bill.

Daniel’s first biographer, whose book was the most widely read frontier epic of antebellum America, presented Daniel as the “Achilles of the West,” for the great hunter “had won [the garden of the earth] from the domination of the savage tribes.”<sup>448</sup> The American republic needed a champion to lead the western charge into the land of opportunity. In his work, *The Frontier Mind*, Moore argued that the fledgling republic required a myth-hero to “put a happy face on a matter which somewhat troubled” its “conscience” and its imagination “seized” the modest hunter “as a much-needed symbol and cloaked him with appropriate legends.”<sup>449</sup> The early nineteenth century journalist and explorer Charles Wilkins Webber described the imaginary Boone as the “Romulus of Saxon blood,” for “he was founding a new empire.” Webber continued, writing that the American Romulus “was fed, not upon the ‘wolf’s milk—but upon the abundance of mild and serene nature—upon the delicious esculence of her forest game, and fruits of her wild luxuriant vines.”<sup>450</sup>

---

<sup>447</sup> Ward, John William. *Andrew Jackson—Symbol for an Age*. London: Oxford University Press, 1953. 37; Goodrich, Charles A. *History of the United States of America*. New York: 1829. 399.

<sup>448</sup> Flint, *Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone*. 227.

<sup>449</sup> Moore, Arthur K. *The Frontier Mind*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957. 148.

<sup>450</sup> Webber, Charles Wilkins. *The Hunter-naturalist: Romance of Sporting Or, Wild Scenes and Wild Hunters*. 1852. 171.

Simply, Daniel’s legend and not Daniel’s fact became the civilizing agent in a world entirely uncivilized and served as a beacon of hope for America’s unseasoned western migration.

### ***Daniel Boone—The Common Man***

In her book, *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America*, Meredith Mason Brown wrote, “Boone did not go to hunt in Kentucky to fulfill a lifelong objective of opening up new territory for white settlement.” Rather, he “wanted to go... because...the land was rich and the wild game plentiful.”<sup>451</sup> A woodsman-philosopher, Daniel felt an ancient connection with the land and animals, a sacred bond of kinship—one shared by his Native brothers. From his youth in Penn’s woods, Daniel viewed the wilderness through the Native’s eyes.

Michael Lofaro described Daniel’s life as full of “irony and ambiguity.” In the preface to his magnificent biography of Daniel Boone, Lofaro wrote:

Although remembered and enshrined for his role as a pioneer, he often was happiest following the same wilderness life as Native Americans. With them Daniel was comfortable and familiar, coexisting far more in mutual respect than in warfare. As someone who bridged and understood both native and pioneer cultures, Boone sought to avoid bloodshed, to negotiate solutions to conflicts, and literally to hold on to a shrinking geographical and cultural middle ground as the violence of native-settler conflict and of the Revolutionary War in the West escalated around him in Kentucky.

---

<sup>451</sup> Brown, *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America*. 39.

Unlike the majority of his fellow hunters and pioneers, Daniel's story is one of peace with the Natives, forever seeking to understand and mimic their ways, customs, and philosophies. His contemporaries considered him a white-Indian and the Natives called him their white-brother. The wood's inhabitants were his hunting companions, teachers, and friends, although they killed two of his sons, pushed his nerves to their limits, recurrently stalled his dreams, and forced his family into ruin and bankruptcy. Before his death, Daniel surprised one visitor, remarking that "I never killed but three [Indians]," for "they have always been kinder to me than whites."<sup>452</sup> Perhaps, however, this irony says it all; Daniel's admiration of the Native—their communal society, formed by honor, respect, strength, and family—sprouted from his great love of the wilderness, its purity, and its natural regime; maybe, Daniel understood the true sagacity of the Native in comparison to and in formation with the unfolding American mind, for he communed with both George Washington and Blackfish, Thomas Jefferson and Oconostata.

Kenneth Rexroth wrote in his *Revisited* history of the American West, "Our memory of the Indians connects us with the soil and the waters and the nonhuman life about us," for our "reason and order...can penetrate" their "savage environment," but it "cannot control" it.<sup>453</sup> Daniel Boone seemed to understand the limits of the American mind and believed that, although the American man can penetrate the wilderness, ultimate control was forever beyond his reach; that, although the West was a land of open opportunity, it was also a land called home. Daniel's affection for the Natives depicted the duality of his

nature and his admiration of their ways evidenced the difference of his soul. Later, Daniel wrote that, "while he could never with safety repose confidence in a Yankee, he had never been deceived by an Indian," and, if he was ever forced to decide, "he should certainly prefer a state of nature to a state of civilization."<sup>454</sup>

### *Home*

In late 1799, Daniel removed his family further west and established his home on the banks of the great Missouri River. His tenure in the East was forever ended. Stationed in the Femme Osage Creek Valley, the nearly 70-year-old woodsman hunted and explored the wilderness beyond Kentucky—the great mountains and prairies, the infinite rivers and boundless horizons. With Derry Coburn and others he explored the Rocky Mountains and the seemingly boundless prairies beyond its great peaks. Some historians suggest that he made it as far as modern day Yellowstone National Park or even the Pacific Ocean. Once again he was alone in the wilderness; once again he was swaddled by the red man's world.

During his quiet evening of life on the Missouri the aged woodsman's search of solitude increased, as he was singed by the "corruptions and indignities of the world."<sup>455</sup> He was humble and meek, yet still full of life. As the Reverend James E. Welch recorded after his visit in 1818, Daniel exhibited a "very mild countenance, fair complexion, soft and quiet in his manners, but little to say unless spoken to." Welch continued, writing that the aged woodsman was very "fond of quiet retirement, of cool self-possession, and indomitable perseverance."<sup>456</sup> Daniel's family later noted that, upon sight of an approaching visitor, he

<sup>452</sup> Wallis, Michael. *The Real Wild West: The 101 Ranch and the Creation of the American West*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. 14.

<sup>453</sup> Rexroth, Kenneth, *Classics Revisited LXI: Parkman's History*.

<sup>454</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 300.

<sup>455</sup> Morgan, *Boone: A Biography*. 430.

<sup>456</sup> Thwaites, *Daniel Boone*. 237.

would often shuffle out of the back door to evade confrontation or conversation and hide in the solace of the woods. On occasion, he would remove himself into the forest for no reason at all. Equipped with only a bearskin, he would lay under the shade of the distant forest singing happily to himself. As his eyesight decreased, Rebecca carried his rifle into the woods for him and helped him mark. He also greatly enjoyed the “society of his children and grandchildren,” who “delighted in his conversation and rejoiced in every little service of kindness they could render him.”<sup>457</sup> During this time of self-reflection, Daniel admitted, “Many heroic actions and chivalrous adventures are related of me which exist only in the region of fancy. With me the world has taken many liberties,” although “I have been but a common man.”<sup>458</sup>

Daniel only twice returned to Kentucky. It was during his last visit that, “with characteristic simplicity and directness,” he visited every man he owed money to and paid the “sum that each man said was due.” Tradition has it that, on returning to Missouri, Daniel had but a half a dollar left.<sup>459</sup> Early Boone historian John Mason Peck, who interviewed Daniel shortly before his death, recorded the woodsman’s conscience upon his final return:

Now I am ready and willing to die. I am relieved from a burden that has long oppressed me. I have paid all my debts, and no one will say, when I am gone, “Boone was a dishonest

man.” I am perfectly willing to die.<sup>460</sup>

His “death song” was now prepared and his honor solidified.

During the late summer of 1820, Daniel experienced frequent bouts of fevers. Expecting the worst, his family called Dr. Jones, “who prescribed medications,” although Daniel said he “would take nothing,” for “he was about worn out.”<sup>461</sup> The tired woodsman had spent the majority of the past seventy years in the wilderness, subsisting on nothing more than forest nuts, roots, and fresh game. He often wintered without a fire, so as not to attract unwanted or dangerous guests. He was born in Pennsylvania, yet explored as far west as the Pacific and as far south as modern-day Orlando, Florida. Although he was awarded over ten thousand acres over his lifetime, he died without a penny to his name or land enough to bury his rotting remains, as he never understood how to properly file a land claim. He had eleven children, although he survived all but two of them. He was a man of the wilderness—he was a son of nature—and nature was calling.

Daniel knew his time was near. He traveled to the home of his youngest son, Nathan, where he knew he could die in peace and near the grave of his beloved Rebecca. Upon his arrival, he asked for his coffin and “thumped at it with his cane to test its soundness.” He discussed that he was to be buried next to Rebecca “on the hill by Tuque Creek,” which overlooked the great Missouri River’s bottom lands.<sup>462</sup> The following morning the tired woodsman inquired for a bowl of warm milk and for every-

---

<sup>457</sup> Bogart, *Daniel Boone and the Hunters of Kentucky*. 379.

<sup>458</sup> Roche, George. *The Book of Heroes: Great Men and Women in American History*. volume 1. Washington: Regnery Publishing, Inc. 73.

<sup>459</sup> Bakeless, *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. 406.

---

<sup>460</sup> Kelsey, D. M. *History of Our Wild West and Stories of Pioneer Life*. Chicago: Thompson & Thomas, 1901. 47

<sup>461</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 318.

<sup>462</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 318.

one to gather. Seated in the front room of his son's home, with Jemima and Nathan holding his hands, his weary soul accepted his death's song a month before his eighty-sixth birthday. His last words were those of a man at peace: "I am going; don't grieve for me," for "my time has come." Just before the sunrise crested the eastern horizon on September 26, 1820, Daniel Boone receded into the West.

### *Conclusions*

Toward the end of Henry Clay's life, it is said that the ghost of Daniel Boone haunted him. Attributed to his daughter-in-law, the story appeared in the *Louisville Courier Journal* on August 31, 1884. Shortly "before his last and fatal visit to Washington," the author of the Bluegrass System was writing in his library at Ashland. A great storm rumbled outside and with a flash of its thunder a "grizzled and weather beaten" figure appeared. Buckskin covered the "unbidden guest's" imposing frame and a six-foot rifle clung to his aged hands. Although carefully closed, Clay's great estate provided no impediment to the eerie guest's will. He entered the library and sat gently across from Clay's writing desk. He exhibited a simple yet mournful stare at his host, uttering not a word. Simple silence befell the room, as though a heavy winter blanket had been lowered on Clay's soul. After a few short moments, the thunder removed the premonition, leaving the wonderfully upholstered chair not the least bit dampened. Soon after, the retiring statesman died.<sup>463</sup>

Although entirely speechless, the ghost of Daniel Boone said it all. Across that Ashland desk sat the two realities of the West. The same year that Daniel Boone died in Missouri, Henry Clay engineered the territory's statehood. "The People" of Kentucky defeated the people of *Kanta-ke* and Henry Clay's economic "Bluegrass System"

defeated Daniel's Edenic Bluegrass philosophy. Daniel Boone's life eulogized the West's simple purities and sublime beauties. Although he died a citizen of the United States, Daniel was during his lifetime a subject of both George II and George III of England; he was a citizen of Transylvania; he was an adopted brave of the Shawnee; and he was a subject of both Charles IV of Spain and the Emperor Napoleon of France during his early years in Missouri. He was a man without a country, for the woods were his home. Clay's ghost depicts a story unfinished, or, perhaps, a story without an end.

This is also seen in Daniel's grave—or lack of grave. In 1845, the Kentucky Legislature passed a resolution to bring the bones of their great founder back to Kentucky. On Saturday, September 13, 1845, a large crowd assembled in the streets of Frankfort to observe the delayed triumph of their founder. His revised gravesite overlooked the Kentucky River and a great monolith was placed above his new pine coffin. By 1983, however, speculation arose that the great hunter and woodsman was not actually buried in Frankfort. After exhuming his body, the forensic anthropologist Dr. David Wolf concluded that the body under the Frankfort monument was most likely the remains of a young black man and not the bones of Kentucky's founder. "We say the remains are here," affirms the record keeper at the cemetery, "but who can say what lies beneath the Boone monument in Frankfort?"<sup>464</sup>

Daniel Boone was not the first to settle Kentucky; he was not civilization's epic pathfinder; he was not Kentucky's founder; he was not an Indian-killer. The monument in Frankfort today overlooks the dome of Kentucky's capitol, whereas his lonely grave in Missouri next to his wife overlooks the "land farmed by his children"

---

<sup>463</sup> *Louisville Courier Journal* on August 31, 1884.

---

<sup>464</sup> Faragher, *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. 362.

in the mixed community of Anglo-Native culture. Like his lost grave, the true history of Daniel Boone is yet unknown. It is only by the living portrait of his life—by finding him in *his* woods, with *his* own gun, and with *his* own mind—that we can uncover the true velocity behind this humble, simple, and “common” woodman.

Although he loved the Native, he put his white family first, and, although the Native adopted him as their brother and son, his epic led to the destruction of their land’s fertility, purity, and their native identities. Eighteen years after Daniel’s death, Andrew Jackson removed his Cherokee brothers from their homelands. In what became known as the great “Trail of Tears,” the Shawnee were dispersed and their identities dissipated, and Daniel’s quiet and peaceful backwoods paradise transformed into the central mercantile enterprise of the young country.<sup>465</sup> Perhaps, this irony is the answer. The further Daniel ventured into the American West the more distant he became with the forming American mind and the more connected he became with the Native. Perhaps, his path’s failure to sustain his true legacy proves the maxim that the advancing American regime could not contain both Sheltowee and Daniel Boone. Perhaps, Daniel was not the representative American man that history has so remembered. Perhaps his destiny was neither to build an empire nor philosophize on the primitive. Perhaps, he was *nature’s man*, for his death says it all: the night of Daniel’s passing the *Kanta-ke* sky grew dark. Positioned under its ashen canopy, the brave of Little Chillicothe buried their tomahawks one by one and passed their peace pipes. Their aged chief, Blackfish—*Cottawamago*—walked alone to the edge of their village and wel-

comed the spirit of his lost brother, for Sheltowee was home at last.

I do hear the birds sing,  
And that the flowers begin to spring,  
Farwell my book, and my devotion.  
Now have I then too this condition,  
That, of all the flowers in the mead,  
Then love I most those flowers, white and red,  
Such that men callen daisies in our town.  
To them I have so great affection,  
As I have said, when coming is the May,  
That in the bed there dawneth me no day  
But I am up, and walking in the mead  
To see this flower against the sun spread,  
When it upriseth early by the morrow:  
That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow:  
So glad am I, when that I have prescience  
Of it, to do it all reverence,  
As she that is of all flowers the flower.

— Chaucer

---

<sup>465</sup> Stephen Aaron’s book, *How the West was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* largely speaks to this last point.

## Appendix

### *Bibliography*

- Aaron, Stephen. *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- Abbott, John S. *Daniel Boone: The Pioneer of Kentucky*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1874.
- Aberth, John. *The First Horseman: Disease in Human History*. Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2007.
- Adair, James. *The History of the American Indians*. Kathryn E. Holland Braund, ed., Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2005.
- Alexis de Tocqueville. *Democracy in America*. trans., ed., Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Arnow, Harriette Simpson, *Seedtime on the Cumberland*. New York, 1960.
- Bakeless, John. *Daniel Boone: Master of the Wilderness*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1939.
- Bancroft, George. *History of the Colonization of United States*. Boston: Charles C Little and James Brown, 1841.
- Bernard Bailyn, *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage Books, 1986).
- Billington, Ray. *Frederick Jackson Turner Historian, Scholar, Teacher* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).
- Bogart, William Henry. *Daniel Boone and the Hunters of Kentucky*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1875.
- Boone, William P. "Letter from William P. Boone to Lyman Draper, April 27, 1846" in *Draper Manuscripts* 19C1.
- Boone, Daniel. "Petition to the Virginia General Assembly, endorsed November 25, 1777" in *Petitions of the Early Inhabitants of Kentucky to the General Assembly of Virginia, 1769-1792*.
- Boone, Daniel. *Memorial to the Kentucky Legislature*. 1812.
- Boone, Daniel. *The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone, Formerly a Hunter; Containing a Narrative of the Wars of Kentucky, as Given by Himself*.



- Boone, Nathan. *My Father, Daniel Boone: The Draper Interviews with Nathan Boone*. Neal O. Hammon, ed. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999.
- Bowman, John. "Col. John Bowman to General Edward Hand, December 12, 1777," in *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio, 1777-1778*, Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds., Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1912.
- Brown, Meredith Mason. *Frontiersman: Daniel Boone and the Making of America*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008.
- Bryan, Daniel Boone. "Leeter to Draper, Feb. 27, 1843," in *Draper Manuscripts 22C5*. Butterfield, Consul Willshire. *History of the Girtys* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co. 1890).
- Byron, Lord. *Don Juan*.
- Callender, Charles, "Shawnee," in Bruce G. Trigger, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, 20 vols. (Washington, D., 1978).
- Catlin, George, *Letters and Notes on the Manners, Customs, and Conditions of the North American Indians*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1973.
- Churchill, Winston. *Marlborough: His Life and Times, Book One*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993.
- Clough, Elizabeth Thatcher, ed., "Abraham Thomas: 'This Small Legacy of Experience,'" *Kentucky Ancestors 26* (Autumn 1990).
- Colden, Cadwallader. *The History of the Five Indian Nations of Canada*, 1727.
- Collins, Lewis. *History of Kentucky*, 1877.
- Cook, Noble David. *Born To Die*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Cronon, William. "Turner's First Stand: The Significance of Significance in American History," in *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*. ed., Richard W. Etulain. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991.
- Diamanti, Melissa 1998. *Archaeological Reconnaissance of Ohio River Island National Wildlife Refuge in Pennsylvania, West Virginian and Kentucky and Phase I Archaeological Survey of Manchester Island No. 2, Kentucky*.
- Draper, Lyman C. *The Life of Daniel Boone*. Ted Franklin Belue, ed. Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 1998.

- Draper, Lyman. "Lyman Draper interview with Edward Byram, October 2, 1863," in *Draper Manuscripts* 19S170.
- Draper, Lyman. "Lyman Draper interview with Peter Smith, 1863," in *Draper Manuscripts* 18S113.
- Draper, Lyman. "Lyman Draper interview with Isaiah Boone, 1846," in *Draper Manuscripts* 19C61.
- Draper, Lyman. "Sketches from Border Life," Draper MSS, 27CC33.
- Draper, Lyman. *Draper Manuscripts*, 6S228, 16C28.
- Draper, Lyman. *Lyman Draper's Manuscripts*, 4B118-ED, 125-Ed.
- Edmunds, R. David. *Tecumseh and the Quest for Indian Leadership*. 2nd Edition, Mark C Carnes, ed., New York: Person Longman, 2007.
- Ellis, Joseph J. *His Excellency, George Washington*. New York: Vintage Books, 2004.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "Nature" in *Selected Essays, Lectures, and Poems*. Robert D. Richardson Jr., ed. New York: Bantam Dell, 1990.
- Enoch, Harry G. *Pioneer Voices: Interviews with Early Settlers of Clark County Kentucky*.
- Faragher, John Mack. *Daniel Boone: the Life and Legend of an American Pioneer*. New York: Henry Hold and Company, 1992.
- Flint, Timothy, *Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone*, ed. James K Folsom. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.
- Franklin B. Dexter, ed., *Diary of David McClure, Doctor of Divinity, 1748-1820* (New York, 1899).
- Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography*. Barns & Co. Inc., 1944.
- Franklin, Benjamin. *Ohio Settlement*, London, 1772.
- General Kane's *Military History of Great Britain*; Lofaro, Michael A. *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003.
- Goodrich, Charles A. *History of the United States of America*. New York: 1829.
- Greenspan, Ezra, ed. *Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself": A Sourcebook and Critical Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

- Hagy, James William. "The First Attempt to Settle Kentucky: Boone in Virginia," *Filson Club Historical Quarterly* 53 (July 1979).
- Hanna, Charles A. *The Wilderness Trail: The Ventures and Adventurers of the Pennsylvania Traders on the Allegheny Path*. New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1911.
- Harrison, Lowell H., Dawson Nelson L., eds. *A Kentucky Sampler: Essays from The Filson Club History Quarterly 1926—1976*. University Press of Kentucky, 1977.
- Hawks, Francis Lewis. *Life of Daniel Boone*. Dayton: Ells, Marquis & Company, 1856.
- Haywood, John. *The Civil and Political History of the State of Tennessee* (Knoxville: Heiskell and Brosn, 1803).
- Henderson, A Gwynn. *Indian Occupation and Use in Northern and Eastern Kentucky during the Contact Period (1540-1795): An Initial Investigation* (Frankfort, 1986).
- Henderson, Archibald. *The Star of Empire: Phases of the Western Movement in the Old Southwest*. Durham: The Seeman Printery, 1919.
- Henderson, Richard. "Judge Richard Henderson's Journal of a Trip to 'Cantuckey' and of Events at Boonesborough in 1775," in Ranck, George Washington, *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days, and Revolutionary Annals*. Louisville: John P. Morton & Company, 1901.
- Henderson, Richard. "Letter of Judge Henderson (June 12, 1775) to Proprietors Remaining in North Carolina in Ranck, George Washington, *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days, and Revolutionary Annals*. Louisville: John P. Morton & Company, 1901.
- Henry, Patrick. "Governor Patrick Henry to Colonel William Fleming, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 1778," in *Frontier Defense On The Upper Ohio, 1777-1778*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds., Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1912.
- Henry, Patrick. "Governor Patrick Henry to General Edward Hand, July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1777," in *Frontier Defense On The Upper Ohio, 1777-1778*, Reuben Gold Thwaites, Louise Phelps Kellogg, eds., Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society, 1912.
- Houston, Peter. *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Daniel Boone*. Ted Franklin Belue, ed. Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 1997.
- Hurt, R. Douglas. *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996.
- J.C.L. Simonde de Sismondi, "Political Economy," 1815.

Jackson Independent Patriot, Nov. 8, 1826.

Jefferson, Thomas. "Letter to William Phillips, July 22, 1779" in *Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts*, William R. Palmer, ed., 11 vols. (1875-1893; rpt., New York: Kraus Reprint Corp., 1960-1969).

Jefferson, Thomas. "Query XI" in *The Portable Thomas Jefferson*. Merrill Peterson, ed., New York: Penguin Books, 1977.

Johnson, J. Stoddard. ed., *First Explorations of Kentucky: Journals of Dr. Thomas Walker, 1750, and Christopher Gist, 1751* (Louisville, 1898).

Johnson, W.C. 1981. *The Campbell Farm Site (36FA26) and Monongahela: A Preliminary Examination and Assessment*. Paper presented at the Fourth Monongahela Symposium, State College, Pennsylvania.

Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania from 1763-1783 inclusive, Together with a Review of the State of Society and Manners of the First Settlers of the Western Country*. Pittsburgh, 1824.

Kelsey, D. M. *History of Our Wild West and Stories of Pioneer Life*. Chicago: Thompson & Thomas, 1901.

Kolodny, Annette. *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1984.

Kroeber, Alfred Louis. *Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America*, Volume 38.  
Lawson, John. *History of North Carolina*. Charlotte: Observer Printing House, 1903.

Lepper, T. Bradley. *Ohio Archeology: An Illustrated Chronicle of Ohio's Ancient American Indian Cultures*. Wilmington: Orange Frazer Press, 2005.

Lewis, Jon E. *The Mammoth Book of The West: The Making of the American West*. New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 1996.

Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of The American West*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1987.

Locke, John. *Second Treatise on Government*. Peter Laslett, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Lofaro, Michael A. *Daniel Boone: An American Life*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003.

Lord, Lewis. "How Many People Were Here Before Columbus?" in *The U.S. News & World Report*, 1997.

- Louisville *Courier Journal* on August 31, 1884.  
Lucien Beckner, ed., “Reverend John D. Shane’s Interview with Pioneer William Clinkenbeard,”  
*FCHQ* 2 (April 1928).
- McClure, David. *Diary of David McClure, Doctor of Divinity, 1748-1820* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1899).
- McNeill, William H, *Plagues and Peoples*. Garden City: Anchor Press, 1976.  
Miller, Randall M., Pencak, William A., eds. *Pennsylvania: A History of the Commonwealth*. Penn State University Press; 1 edition (October 22, 2002).
- Moize, Elizabeth A. *Daniel Boone, First Hero of the Frontier*. 1895.
- Moore, Arthur K. *The Frontier Mind*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1957.
- Morgan, Edmund S. *American Heroes: Profiles of Men and Women who Shaped Early America*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010.
- Morgan, Robert. *Boone: A Biography*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2007.  
Niles’ Register, X, 361 (June 15, 1816).
- Noble, David W. “Frederick Jackson Turner: The Machine and the Loss of the Covenant” in  
*Historians Against History: The Frontier Thesis and the National Covenant in American Historical Writing since 1830*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1965.
- O’Brien, Michael, I. *Irish Pioneers in Kentucky*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.
- Peck, John Mason. “Life of Daniel Boone, The Pioneer of Kentucky” in *Makers of American History*. New York: The University Society, 1904.
- Penn, William. Letter to the “King of the Indians,” October 18, 1681, Richard Dunn and Mary Maples Dunn, eds., *The Papers of William Penn*, 5 vols. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981-86).
- Perkins, James H. *North American Review*, LXII, 97, 86-87. (January, 1846).
- Pierson, George Wilson. “The Frontier and American Institutions: A Criticism of the Turner Theory,” in *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*. ed., George Rogers Taylor. Lexington: D. C. Heath and Company, 1972.
- Punke, Michael. *The Reveenant*. New York: Picador Publishing, 2002.

- Ranck, George Washington. *Boonesborough: Its Founding, Pioneer Struggles, Indian Experiences, Transylvania Days, and Revolutionary Annals*. Louisville: John P. Morton & Company, 1901.
- Ray Allen Billington, ed. *Frontier and Section: Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1961).
- Rexroth, Kenneth, *Classics Revisited LXI: Parkman's History*.
- Rice, Otis. *Frontier Kentucky*, University Press of Kentucky: Second Edition (July 20, 1993).
- Richard W. Etulain. "Introduction: The Rise of Western Historiography," in *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*. ed., Richard W. Etulain. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991.
- Richter, Daniel K. *The Ordeal of the Long-House: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (Chapel Hill, 1992).
- Robert A Genheimer, ed., "Cultures Before Contact: The Late Prehistory of Ohio and Surrounding Regions" in *Ohio Archaeological Council*, 2000.
- Robert Orme, "Journal of General Braddock's Expedition," *British Library*, 102-107; Ward, Matthew. *Breaking The Backcountry: The Seven Years' War In Virginia And Pennsylvania 1754-1765*, University of Pittsburgh Press; 1 edition (October 17, 2004).
- Roche, George. *The Book of Heroes: Great Men and Women in American History*. volume 1. Washington: Regnery Publishing, Inc.
- Simm's *Southern Magazine*, April 1850.
- Slotkin, Richard. *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1973.
- Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edwin Cannan, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.
- Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as a Symbol and Myth*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950.
- Smith, James. "Col. James Smith's Life Among the Delawares, 1755-1759" in *The Account of Mary Rowlandson and Other Indian Captivity Narratives*. Horace Kephart, ed. Mineola: Dover Publications, 1915.
- Strauss, Leo. *Natural Right and History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.
- Sullivan, Daniel. "Daniel Sullivan to Colonel John Cannon, Fort Pitt, March 20, 1778" in *Frontier Defense on the Upper Ohio 1777-1778*, Reuben Gold Thwaites and Louise P. Kellogg, eds., Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1912).

- Sweeney, J. Gray. *The Columbus of the Woods: Daniel Boone and the Typology of Manifest Destiny*. St. Louis: The Washington University Gallery of Art, 1992.
- The Governor's Messages and Reports of the Heads of Departments of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, Part II. 1877.
- The Histories* 6. 37. 1-4 Loeb ed., 3:353.
- Thomas J. Farnham, *Travels in the Great Western Prairies, the Anahuac and Rocky Mountains, and in the Oregon Territory* (Poughkeepsie, N. Y., 1841).
- Thwaites, Reuben Gold. *Daniel Boone*. BiblioLife, 1923.
- Timberlake, Henry. *The Memoirs of Lt. Henry Timberlake: The Story of a Soldier, Adventurer, and Emissary to the Cherokees, 1756-1765*. Duane H. King, ed., Cherokee: Cherokee Indian Press, 2007.
- Trowbridge, Charles Christopher. *Shawnese Traditions*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1939.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. "Contributions of the West to American Democracy," in *Frontier in American History*.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. "Hunter Type," in Jacobs, ed., *Frederick Jackson Turner's Legacy*, 153, and "Middle Western Pioneer Democracy," in *Frontier in American History*.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. "Problems in American History," *The Aegis*, November 4, 1892, repr. in *Early Writings*.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. *Rise of the New West: 1819-1829* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1906).
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Character and Influence of the Indian Trade in Wisconsin*.
- Turner, Jackson. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in *The Early Writings of Frederick Jackson Turner, with a List of All His Works Compiled by Everett E. Edwards and an Introduction by Fulmer Mood*. (Madison, Wisconsin, 1938).
- Thoreau, Henry. "Walden," Chapter 1," in *Writings*, Riverside edition, 11 vols. (Boston, 1893-1894), II.
- Walker, Felix. *Felix Walker's Narrative of His Trip with Boone from Long Island to Boonesborough in March 1775*. Debow's Review of February, 1854.
- Wallace, Paul. *Daniel Boone in Pennsylvania*.

- Wallis, Michael. *The Real Wild West: The 101 Ranch and the Creation of the American West*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999.
- Ward, John William. *Andrew Jackson—Symbol for an Age*. London: Oxford University Press, 1953.
- Ward, Matthew. *Breaking The Backcountry: The Seven Years' War In Virginia And Pennsylvania 1754-1765*, University of Pittsburgh Press; 1 edition (October 17, 2004).
- Washington, George, "The Creative Forces in Westward Expansion: Henderson and Boone," *American Historical Review*, 20 (October 1914).
- Webber, Charles Wilkins. *The Hunter-naturalist: Romance of Sporting Or, Wild Scenes and Wild Hunters*. 1852.
- Weiser, Conrad. "Message of Scaroyady conveyed by Conrad Weiser to the governor of Pennsylvania," in *Memorandum of Conrad Weiser*, " August 23, 1755, Penn MS, Large Folio, II, Historical Society of Philadelphia, qtd. in *Conrad Wiser*.
- Whitman, Walt. "Poem of the Sayers of the Words of the Earth," *Leaves of Grass*. (New York, 1856).
- Wigglesworth, Michael. "God's Controversy with New England," in Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, XII (1871-1873).
- William Cronon. "Turner's First Stand: The Significance of Significance in American History," in *Writing Western History: Essays on Major Western Historians*. ed., Richard W. Etulain. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991
- William Gilmore Simms, "Daniel Boone—The First Hunter of Kentucky," in his *Views and Reviews in American Literature, History and Fiction*, ed. C. Hugh Holman (1845; reprint, Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1963).
- Woods, M.B. Letter to Lyman Draper, April 9, 1883, *Draper Manuscripts* 4C26.
- Xenophon, "On Hunting" in *Selections*. H. G. Dakyns.