Daniel Boone and the Pioneers' Odyssey Into the American Heartland Lesson 3: The Conclusion to the Fight for Kentucky and the Later Years In the Life of Daniel Boone

Welcome back! Today we will go over our third lesson on the frontier. We will cover the conclusion of the fight for Kentucky, discuss Daniel Boone beyond the war, and explore the impact Daniel Boone and the Pioneers left on American and World History.

George Rogers Clark and 175 Pioneers Go on the Offensive Against the British and their Indian Allies June 1778 to September 1783

Another important Pioneer leader on the Kentucky frontier was George Rogers Clark. George was a military man tasked with subduing the Indians and the British. He organized and led a militia of 175 Pioneers from a fort near present day Louisville. The militia crossed the Ohio River and seized an Indian village.

Note: Louisville is in the center of the northern border of Kentucky, Kentucky's Northern border is the Ohio river

Photo Credit: *Kentucky Regions Map* from Wikimedia commons: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kentucky_regions_map.png

The militia then went on to seize British forts in modern day Illinois and Indiana. The British forts were seized with little resistance, some including the fort at Kaskaskia without even firing a shot. This was because the Indians and French Canadians the British used to attack the settlements were unwilling to pick up arms to defend the British. In response the British

governor Hamilton led a small British force and took back one of their forts at Vincennes. In February 1779, Clark and the Pioneers crossed water in the cold winter to recapture the fort. After seizing the British fort a second time, Governor Hamilton surrendered to Clark. These victories raised morale amongst the Pioneers. After the news of these victories spread to the East Coast, Pioneers again started traveling to Kentucky and new settlements started forming again. George Rogers Clark Continued to lead offensives against the British and Indians until the treaty of Paris marking the end of the American Revolution.

Massacre at Ruddle's Station

The British, and American Indian tribes from Ohio, a force of about 500 men, followed the Licking River into northern Kentucky to seize the American settlements. The force also brought two artillery pieces. When the force arrived at Ruddle Station, the British fired warning shots from their artillery. The Indians disregarded the plans to first threaten the settlement and attacked without British approval. Isaac Ruddle surrendered with the promise the inhabitants would not be harmed. The British commander Henry Byrd agreed to these conditions. After the Americans surrendered, the Indian warriors rushed in killing many of the men, women, and children. The force then seized another settlement, Martin's Station. The captured Pioneers were taken in a rough manner to Detroit, those who couldn't keep up were killed. In response, George Rogers Clark led a retaliatory force to the Shawnee capitals Chillicothe and Piqoua. The capitals were destroyed and the Shawnee were dispersed.

Shawnee Attack Daniel and his Brother Edward Boone While Hunting

Following the dispersion of the Shawnee capitals, the Shawnee continued to attack the Pioneers in a more stealthy fashion. On one such occasion when Daniel and his brother Edward were hunting, a Shawnee shot Edward Boone, proceeding to scalp and mutilate his dead body. Daniel buried his brother on a site on Boone Creek Kentucky.

The Lead Up to and Battle of Blue Licks

In 1782, a combined force of Shawnee, Wyandott, Miami, Mingo, Delaware, Chipewa, and British loyalists led by William Caldwell and two infamous British fighters, Alan McCee and Simon Gurrey also known as "the White Indian", arrived at the settlement Bryan's Station, near Lexington. As the force was about to attack, Pioneer women left the fort to collect needed water from a spring. The enemy force allowed the women to collect the water and return to the fort before starting the attack. The fort was fired on; cattle and sheep were killed. Responding to these and other attacks against Pioneer settlements, a force of 176 militia men including Daniel Boone, chased the Indians and the British.

The Indians and British flee as the Pioneers chase them. Daniel Boone starts feeling hesitant and voices that the force should wait for backup but the captain makes the call to continue the pursuit. The Indians and British lead the Pioneers into an ambush at the Blue Licks. At the Blue Licks the Indians ambushed the pursuing Pioneers, attacking with guns and tomahawks. During the battle sixty-seven Pioneers died and eleven were taken prisoner. Among the dead was Daniel's second-born son, Israel Boone, and Daniel's nephew, Thomas Boone.

" I can not reflect on this dreadful scene but sorrow fills my heart. Some of the Kentuckians escaped on horseback, a few on foot, and being dispersed everywhere in a few hours brought the melancholy news of this unfortunate battle to Lexington. Many widows were now made. The sorrow filled hearts of the inhabitants exceed anything I am able to describe."

-Daniel Boone from the Witnessing History Documentary on Daniel Boone

Pinkashaw Council

On April 15, 1784 the Shawnee, Delawares, and Chickasaw, gave up their prisoners and offered a coronet of peace to the White settlers at the Falls of Ohio.

"This being the day of joy to the Wabash Indians, we beg for a little drop of your milk, to let our warriors

see it came from your own breast. We were born and raised in the woods; we could never learn to make rum—- God has made the White Flesh masters of the world; they make everything; and we all love rum—"

Quote from the Piankashaw Council in *The Discovery, Settlement And Present State Of Kentucky to Which Is Added The Adventures Of Daniel Boon 1784*

Reading this quote you can imagine what it felt like for the Indians, another civilization showed up with these forts. The way my editor put it is that it must have felt as if death stars showed up in our current time.

Daniel Boone's Later Life

In 1784, Daniel Boone, now in his 50s, tells his story to John Filson, a schoolteacher. The book *The Discovery, Settlement And Present State Of Kentucky to Which Is Added The Adventures Of Daniel Boon(sic)* was a hit and turned Daniel into an American legend. These lessons here have used this book as source material. After the war was over Daniel worked as a surveyor, earning an excellent reputation. With his surveying and land speculating money Daniel opened a tavern and general store. Daniel Boone had trouble settling down into a more calm post-war Kentucky; Daniel found being a businessman confining and demanding. His business career didn't work out. This shows even the legend Daniel Boone wasn't a success at everything. He longed for his days on the frontier. Daniel eventually gave the tavern and store to his son Jessie. After playing such a large role in creating Kentucky, the restless Daniel Boone sold his land and headed west once again into Missouri, a territory at the time controlled by Spain. Here Daniel supported himself by hunting. After 57 years of marriage, Rebecca Boone died in Missouri of illness. Daniel buried his wife and chose to be buried at the same spot in Marthasville, Missouri. As a widower, Daniel became increasingly devout and evangelized others into Christianity. Here is a quote from a letter to his sister-in-law from the elder Daniel Boone.:

"Relating to our family and how we live in this world, what chance we shall have in the next we know not, for my part, I am as ignorant as a child of all religion. I live to love and fear God, believe in Jesus Christ, do all the good to my neighbor and myself that I can and do as little harm as I can help, and trust in God's mercy for the rest. And I believe God never made a man of my principle to be lost. And I flatter myself, dear sister, that you are well on your way to Christianity."

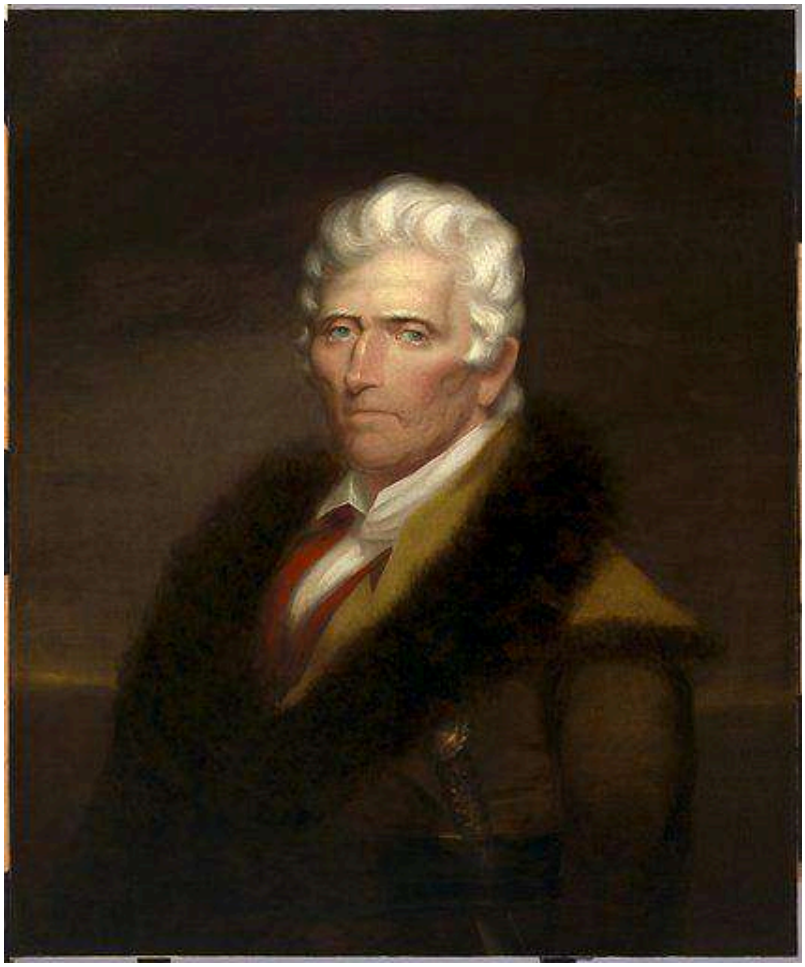
-Daniel Boone the evangelist from the Witnessing History Documentary on Daniel Boone

At age 84, Daniel Boone was visited by artist Chester Harding. Here Daniel entertained his guest. Chester once asked Daniel if he ever got lost, having no compass? Daniel responded:

"No, I can't say as ever I was lost, but I was bewildered once for three days."

-Daniel Boone from the Witnessing History Documentary on Daniel Boone

Chester Harding painted Daniel's only portrait during his life.



84 year old Daniel Boone
Photo Credit: Painting by Chester Harding, image from Look And Learn
https://www.lookandlearn.com/history-images/YSP007784/Daniel-Boone

At dawn September 26 1820 Daniel died surrounded by his surviving children, grandchildren, and friends. Just before he died Daniel Boone said:

"I'm going home now, my time has come"

-Daniel Boone from the Witnessing History Documentary on Daniel Boone

Daniel Boone was buried beside his wife as he requested.

Daniel Boone's Legacy

Daniel Boone helped to found the state of Kentucky. Having a stronghold west of the Appalachian mountains helped America to create more states in the west, eventually making it all the way to the Pacific ocean. Without Daniel Boone, or someone like Daniel Boone the United States of America could have just been the 13 colonies on the east coast. Daniel's idea which he brought up to breed horses left an impact on the culture of Kentucky. Kentucky continues to be a horse breeding hotspot. Many wealthy Kentuckians own horses and the horses racing in the Kentucky Derby is a beloved Kentucky tradition. Popular lore is that Daniel Boone is featured on the Kentucky State flag with Henry Clay. Henry Clay is an important Kentucky politician that had different issues to deal with in a future settled Kentucky. One of these issues Henry Clay dealt with, is that he led the Missouri compromise averting a crisis for the moment on the issue of slavery.

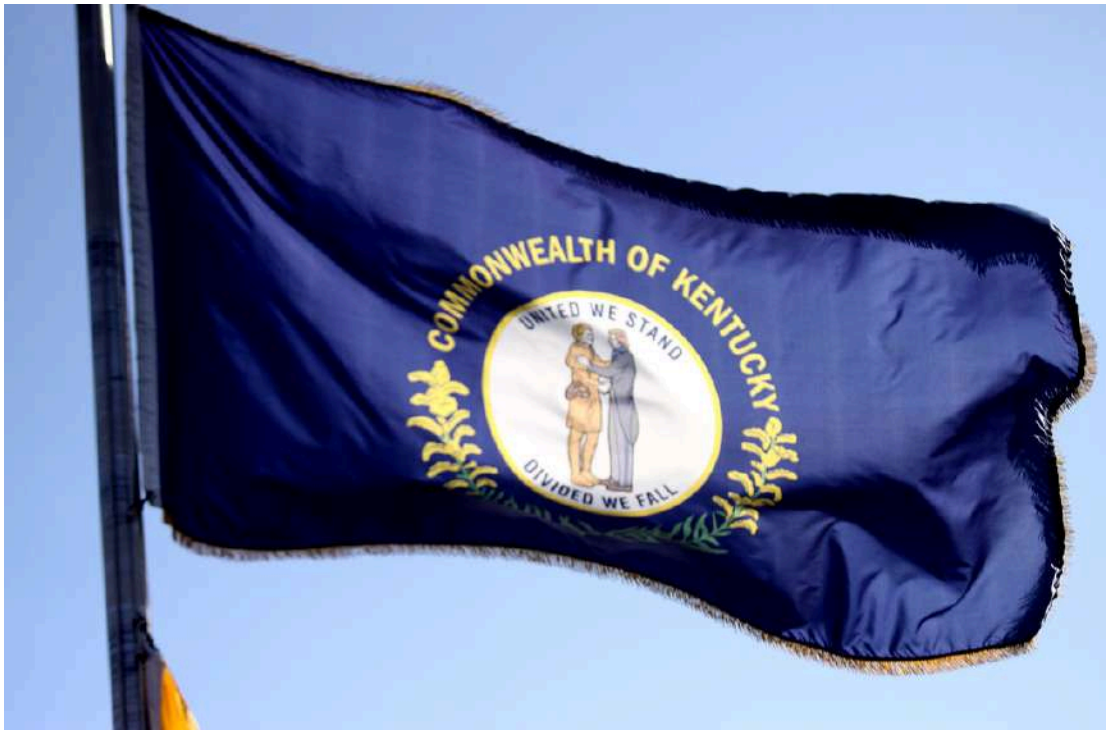


Photo Credit: "The Kentucky flag outside the Laurel County Courthouse in London, Kentucky Photo taken by Flickr user Gage Skidmore"
https://www.flickr.com/photos/gageskidmore/4468869211

The Daniel Boone National Forest is a protected wilderness where guests can explore the preserved wilderness similar to how it was when Daniel Boone and the Pioneers were alive. Daniel Boone and the Kentuckians lived the first great western story. The western genre has inspired many movies, books, and songs that captivates people around the world.

When people from other countries think of White Americans, the Wild West Cowboy is the first character that often comes to mind. Although Pioneer or frontiersman may be a more precise term than cowboy for Daniel Boone because he didn't own a ranch, however studying him I saw aspects of the cowboy persona in his personality and life story. He also wore a broad brimmed hat similar to cowboys, but unlike cowboys wore moccasin shoes not cowboy boots. proto-cowboy is a good way to put Daniel Boone. There's something about the cowboy that interests people more than other American archetypes like the plantation owner, founding father, inventor, Pilgrim, Quaker, Mormon or business mogul.

There have been books and TV series made about Daniel Boone's story. I heard when doing my research that many of these TV shows contain some tall tales that aren't historically accurate. Regardless of the historical accuracy question, the TV series cemented Daniel's place in American culture, captured the spirit of Daniel Boone, and had a sense of adventure and fun. Although my editor pointed out the TV series reflect the past in a way we wanted the past to be.

I saw a couple episodes of the TV series and noticed TV Daniel Boone had an Indian sidekick that I didn't notice researching the historical Daniel Boone. If anyone was Daniel Boone's sidekick; Daniel Boone's younger brother Squire Boone looked up to his older brother Daniel and was right next to Daniel through many of his adventures. In an article by the Abbeville Institute it was said that in the previous generations, "Americans, both North and South, considered Boone to be the quintessential American man. So did Europeans." What Daniel Boone and the Pioneers accomplished is that they set their eyes on settling Kentucky, and through the trials and tribulations of nature, and conflict with the American Indians forged a new place.

There was a song I heard on the radio one night recently, *Should've Been a Cowboy* by Toby Keith. The song isn't about Daniel Boone but one line made me think of the type of man Daniel Boone was, echoing into the future, "Sleeping out all night beneath the … stars with a dream in my eye and prayer in my heart"*. Class is dismissed.

Photo Credit: "The Milky Way Surreality on Big South Fork Gorge" by Flickr user Don Sniegowski https://www.flickr.com/photos/sniegowski/50163068113

* In the Toby Keith song "Should Have Been a Cowboy" the lyrics say "Sleeping out all night beneath the *desert* stars." The word desert was taken out to fit Kentucky

Exercises:

1. Who was the Pioneer that led 175 men on a successful offensive into British controlled territory?

a) Daniel Boone
b) George Rogers Clark
c) Simon Kenton
d) Davy Crockett

2. Who was beside the historical Daniel Boone on many of his adventures?

a) A half American Indian named Mingo
b) Chief Blackfish
c) George Rogers Clark
d) Squire Boone

3. What is one way Daniel Boone and the Pioneers had an impact on history?

4. Who do you think is a modern day Daniel Boone? Name a person and explain the similarities.

5. Similar to how the Pioneers would hunt, use the soil, and collect water and salt from their environment; what can Bedrock Americans forage of value from the rest of the current United States of America? For example, now food is obtained more easily from grocery stores, clothes are imported from places with cheap labor, technology and tools can be bought from the store.

Source Material:

Filson, John. *The Discovery, Settlement And Present State Of Kentucky to Which Is Added The Adventures Of Daniel Boon 1784*. Kessinger's Legacy Reprints, 1784.

PART 1-DANIEL BOONE AND THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN WEST, Witnessing History Education Foundation, 20 June 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gr14TTfWB0Y&t=2650s.

PART 2-DANIEL BOONE AND THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN WEST. Witnessing History Education Foundation, 18 June 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqbspsrIsjk&t=47s.

Enoch, Harry G., and Anne Crabb. *Settling Boonesborough: Journals, Letters and Other Documents, 1775*. Fort Boonesborough Foundation, 2022.

McClanahan, Brion. *Abbeville Institute*, 11 Apr. 2014, www.abbevilleinstitute.org/daniel-boone-was-a-man/.

"George Rogers Clark and War in the West." Kentucky History Channel, 29 Jan. 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5Di4w6roK8&t=1736s.

"George Rogers Clark Biography." *Indiana Historical Bureau*, www.in.gov/history/for-educators/all-resources-for-educators/resources/george-rogers-clark/george-rogers-clark-biography/#: