

## SQUIRE BOONE THE FORGOTTEN MAN

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Historians of Kentucky have mentioned too briefly and too infrequently the undisputed heroism, the dauntless courage, the daring risks, the miraculous escapes, the tragic disappointments, and the invaluable skills shown by one of our first citizens — Squire Boone. He was proud, and yet humble. He was as fierce as a savage when defending himself or his family, yet gentle as a Quaker when preaching in the pioneer settlements. He fought throughout his lifetime to hold onto his hard earned lands and yet he was generous to those in need. Without the ability of Squire, which was demonstrated repeatedly in the woods and mountains of the hostile wilderness, the legendary Daniel Boone might never have been heard from again after his first venture into the Indian infested Hunting Ground of Kaintucke.

Squire Boone did not have a John Filson to record his exploits and make him a legend as did his older brother, Daniel. Scarcely three short pages are devoted to the adventures of Squire as told by Daniel Boone in John Filson's, *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke*.

Nearly every child in Kentucky can relate some of the experiences of Daniel Boone, especially since television has dramatized the Boone legends. Few though can even identify Squire Boone, much less recount what he did, and it is suspected that Squire's exploits, especially around Boonesborough, have been credited to Daniel.

Knowing the extent and acceptance of the Daniel Boone legend, and without defining the meaning of manhood, I will leave to the reader the decision of which was the better man — Daniel or Squire.

Eleven children were born to Squire Boone, Sr. and Sarah Morgan Boone: Sarah in 1724, Israel in 1726, Samuel in 1728, Jonathan in 1730, Elizabeth in 1732, Daniel in 1734, Mary in 1736, George in 1739, Edward in 1740, Squire, Jr. on October 5, 1744, and the youngest, Hannah, in 1746. Home was in Berks County, Pennsylvania, near the present city of Reading.

The Boone family moved when Squire, Jr., was about five or six years old to Virginia, near Winchester. Spending only a year or two there,

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the family moved on to North Carolina, settling on the East Side of the South Yadkin River, near the present city of Wilkesboro. Here young Squire grew and learned to shoot, to track, and to find his way in the thick forests and high hills of the sparsely settled frontier.

When he was about fifteen, his mother returned with him to Pennsylvania on horseback. There he was apprenticed to his cousin, Samuel Boone, to learn gunsmithing. However, for reasons which can only be surmised, the five-year apprenticeship was bought up six months before its expiration by the parents of young Squire, who then returned to **the woods and hills** he loved so well in North Carolina. Now twenty years old, anxious to make his own way, and full of the independent spirit so characteristic of the Boones, Squire, Jr., fell in love with his childhood sweetheart, Jane Van Cleve. They were married August 8, 1765, and set up housekeeping in a cabin between Bear Creek and the Yadkin River where there were no settlements, no people, just the forests and streams and the two of them. It was in this first year of marriage that Squire's father passed away at the age of 69.

Hardships pressed the Boones. Game was less plentiful. Settlers were moving into the valleys. Late in the summer of 1765, Squire and Daniel, with three others, struck out South to hunt more elbow room for their families. They explored all the way to Florida but found the lands wet and covered with briars, certainly not to their liking. They returned to the Yadkin Valley, wiser, hungrier, and more restless perhaps than ever. They knew the prospects North, East, now South. There was no alternative except to challenge the mystery, the hostility, the unknown wilderness to the West.

Faced with the necessity of providing for their families, Squire and Daniel took their rifles, some supplies, and much courage over the mountains in 1767. They hoped to find the long rumored, abundance of game and also discover a short quick route that was known and used by the Indian raiding parties. They spent the winter under a shelter built near a spring at the head of the left fork of now Middle Creek in Floyd County. The hunt was rewarded with many pelts and skins, and the two brothers returned to North Carolina in the spring with their horses laden, but no short cut was found.

Late in the Fall of 1768 a trader and peddler named John Finley wandered into the Boone circle. He talked of broad meadows covered at times as far as the eye could see with herds of buffalo, of woods swarming with deer, streams occupied by numerous beaver. These glowing accounts fired their enthusiasm.

Daniel Boone had known John Finley from association in a previous campaign under Braddock. Finley was apparently trustworthy and would be just the man to show the Boones what they had been looking

for, especially since Finley said he knew the warriors' path through the mountains!

When spring came, five men, including Boone and Finley, set out on May 1, 1769, for Kentucky. Squire Boone and the families of those brave adventurers watched the hunting party of six leave the settlements, and vanish into the wilderness.

Fall and harvest time passed without word from the West. Squire was worried about his older brother. Winter was coming, provisions had to be made for his own family as well as Daniel's.

Once this was done, Squire and another young companion, Alex Neely, set off on horseback in November of 1769. Squire had heard the hunters planning their trip and had taken note of Finley's description of the country through which they would be traveling but he had never been through this territory himself. There were no highways, no police protection, no armies, no tourist information centers, not even a map — only a rifle and supplies, a horse, his animal instincts, natural intelligence, cultivated skills, and the love of a brother!

Before hard winter had closed in, Squire and his friend discovered Daniel and John Stewart not too far from the river now known as the Kentucky, deep in Indian country — an incredible exploit. Yet this achievement has been all but overlooked by historians. It is highly significant in that history might never have had a Daniel Boone without this example of unselfish devotion of a brother in the face of nearly insurmountable dangers and little likelihood of success.

Daniel and Stewart had been captured by Indians and had just escaped. Finley and the others had disappeared. The original hunting party had been separated. Their shelters had been destroyed and their horses and pelts had been stolen. Within a few days after Squire found Daniel, disaster struck again. John Stewart, who had married their little sister, Hannah, was killed. Young Neely, who had accompanied Squire into this wilderness, decided to make a run for the direction of North Carolina. He was never heard from again. Daniel and Squire successfully eluded their would-be captors or killers.

Now the brothers faced the perils of the wilderness alone. The rest of the winter and early spring were spent together, hunting for food and taking pelts. Neither apparently was discovered by hostile savages as they explored the upper waters of the Kentucky and the hills of Eastern Kentucky. In early May it was agreed that Squire should carry back to North Carolina the furs that had been acquired in the winter and spring. Daniel would not go home and wanted Squire to bring fresh supplies and horses for further hunting.

The younger Boone made the journey alone without injury. The news of Daniel's safety was received along with the sad disclosures that

had to be made to the families of those in the hunting party who would not return. Squire traded the pelts he brought home for supplies. Nothing is known of the attitude which met his disclosure that he was returning to hunt and explore with Daniel. Knowing the reception that a husband and father gets nowadays with the news that he is leaving on a week's hunting or even business trip, it can be surmised what Jane felt at the instant she was told of Squire's plans to return.

And what of Rebecca?

Within three months Squire covered the buffalo trails and warriors' paths out of Central Kentucky to North Carolina, obtained his needed supplies, and returned again over the same dangerous route, arriving at a prearranged meeting place on a prearranged date, July 27, 1770, to meet his brother, Daniel! The place was Daniel's old shelter on Station Camp Creek, and Daniel met him there as arranged.

The rest of 1770 was spent exploring the rivers and valleys of southeastern Kentucky and the edge of the Bluegrass region. Many years later a stone was found in Madison County upon which had been carved: "1770 Squire Boone." Repeated indications of recent Indian presence were discovered, but the Boone boys were able to avoid trouble. Finally, in April of 1771, they made their way back to the Yadkin Valley in North Carolina.

A period of catching up on family life followed. Finally, in 1773, a number of hopeful families pulled out behind Daniel Boone to make new lives in the West. When Indians killed several of the company in Powell's Valley, the others voted to turn back. The Boones wanted to press on, though Daniel's own son had been one of the victims, but the majority prevailed and the journey was called off.

In 1775, Daniel Boone was commissioned by Richard Henderson to cut a trail to the Kentucky River and in March the "Wilderness Road" was blazed through Cumberland Gap to the mouth of Otter Creek in Madison County. There on the south side of the Kentucky River the first log fort was built and named Boonesborough. The party was harassed by Indians along the route, and in one skirmish Captain William Twetty was killed near the present site of Richmond on March 25. Both Boones escaped injury.

Squire traveled over much of Central Kentucky during 1775, marking trees with his initials, "S. B.," and laying the basis for future claims. In October he sold his first cabin in Lincoln County to Joseph Benz and adjoining land to George Smith. He returned to North Carolina and in the early part of 1776 led out a large contingent of settlers, including his own family and that of Daniel's.

The site in what is now Shelby County was again visited in the year 1776. A corn crop was planted and a stone was cut out with a pick.

Into the stone Squire cut his name and the date and the letters painted in red. From this marker the location came to be called "Painted Stone Station." Squire was called back to this place by the Shelby County Court twenty years later to identify it in a deposition, a portion of which follows:

"In the summer in the year 1775, I this deponant came to the place where Boone's Station on Clear Creek was since built. I then made a small improvement, about one quarter of a mile North of where the Old Mill at said Boones Station now stands. In the Spring of the year 1776, I came again to the same place, and took a stone out of the creek, and with a mill pick, picked my name, in full, and the date of the year thereon, and with red paint, I painted the letters and figures all red. From which stone this Tract of land took the name of 'The Painted Stone' tract. The said stone was about one inch thick and eighteen inches long and wide. The place which I now show about one hundred yards above the said Old Mill, bank of the creek, is the place where I marked it as aforesaid and left it there until it was (about three years afterward) carried away by some person; and further saith not.

(Signed) Squire Boone"

Returning to Fort Boonesborough, Squire performed the first marriage ceremony in Kentucky on August 7, 1776. The parties were Samuel Henderson, younger brother of Col. Henderson, and Elizabeth Calloway, daughter of Col. Richard Calloway.

Fort Harrod had been established two weeks earlier than Boonesborough, and in 1777 Squire and his family moved to that station. While attempting to harvest a crop of corn outside Fort Harrod, Squire and another man were attacked by three Indians. The companion was killed outright. Squire shot one of the attackers and engaged in a hand to hand fight with the other two, succeeding in fatally wounding one with his sword and scaring the other off. The battle left Squire with a severe tomahawk wound across his forehead, the scar from which he carried the remainder of his life. Two weeks later he was shot in another encounter with an Indian, suffering a broken rib. Squire recalled the former Fort Harrod incident to one of his sons and said: "best little Indian fight I was ever in . . ."

In 1778, Daniel was captured again by Indians and taken North, and Squire returned to Fort Boonesborough. On August 8, 1778, around 450 Indians under the leadership of Chief Black Fish and some British soldiers encircled the stockaded settlers.

A council was called for by Black Fish and eight "forters" were selected to meet the war leaders in front of the stockade gate. Squire and Daniel were both among the Fort representatives, Daniel having escaped captivity and arrived just ahead of the Indian war band. As a

result of the conference 24 hours were given the "forters" to discuss surrendering.

At the end of the deliberative period, another conference was held. A peace pipe was passed around the circle of representatives and each arose for a handshaking ceremony to seal the bargain. As if by pre-arranged signal, there immediately sprang upon the backs of each settler two Indian warriors! Eye witnesses atop the walk of the fort said that Squire threw Indians from his back like "so many little children." He dashed for the fort and was brought down by a rifle ball. Bouncing up like an animal, he again ran for the gate only to find that it had been barred! Dodging the hail of rifle balls that poured into the stockade wall beside him, he skirted the fort and dove through a disguised door that had been designed for secret and quick entrance to the fort.

The siege of Fort Boonesborough now began. Squire, although painfully injured in the back and shoulder, was able to assist in the defense for several days. A lull in the fighting gave him a chance to rest and an opportunity for Daniel to remove the lead in his shoulder. Daniel cut open the wound with a hunting knife and extracted the missile. As Squire lay recovering, he kept a broadax by his bed to use in the event of the "last action."

This momentous battle lasted for ten days before the attackers gave up hope of capturing or annihilating the defenders of Fort Boonesborough and drifted away into the forest. The weary and hungry "forters" breathed easier.

It was the next year, 1779, before Squire could move his family away. He settled for a time at Fort Harrod again where his wife, Jane, was shot at but escaped being hit. A helper hired to carry their belongings from the river to the fort was never seen again. Some time later that year, Squire moved his family down the Kentucky and Ohio rivers to the Falls where several settlements had grown up. A land court had been set up to record claims, and here he secured a certificate to a tract of 400 acres and an adjoining pre-emption of 1,000 acres on Silver Creek in present-day Madison County. Claim was made on the basis of his improving the land and raising a crop of corn in 1776 and residing there since. Another certificate was obtained for a tract of 400 acres and an adjoining 1,000 acres of pre-empted land on Clear Creek known as the "Painted Stone" tract.

Continued Indian raiding parties made settlement away from the forts extremely hazardous, but it is thought that Squire began the construction of this fort on Clear Creek in the early winter of 1779. He was still unable to occupy it and purchased some lots in Louisville on high ground near the mouth of Bear Grass Creek, erecting a cabin in which

to spend the winter. He signed the early petitions of 1779 and 1780 presented by the residents of Louisville to the Virginia Legislature for formal chartering of the town at the Falls.

When the warm weather of Spring made moving less of a hardship, Squire and his family occupied the fort at "Painted Stone" on Clear Creek. However, warmer weather made moving easier on the Indians, too. Their war parties appeared again and again through Shelby County. The settlers in the area gathered for protection at Squire Boone's station, the "Painted Stone." Militia companies were formed throughout Kentucky, and Squire was appointed Captain over 23 men registered at his station. He was also appointed a Justice of the Peace and married many couples at the "Painted Stone" fort. This tract of land was surveyed on March 8, 1781, and recorded for Squire's title in the Louisville land office. Another tract of 250 acres on Fox Run was surveyed for Sarah Boone, presumably his daughter, the same month.

A stone has been set at the edge of the Eminence Road, 2½ miles North of Shelbyville, and a marker placed by the Isaac Shelby Chapter of the D.A.R., memorializing the site of Squire Boone's Station ½ mile West of the monument. The land is owned by Jack Bayless now and can be viewed with his permission. It is on high ground, commanding a beautiful, sweeping view of Clear Creek and the town of Shelbyville to the South.

An Indian attack occurred on the men of "Painted Stone" as they were clearing land near the station in April of 1781. The shooting began at sunrise, and all the men who were in the clearing were killed except one who managed to make the safety of the stockade. Nearly a dozen men rushed out of the fort, including Squire, to meet the Indians, but were cut down as they ran out. Among the injured was Squire who had taken two bullet wounds, one in his right arm and one in his right side. He nearly died, never fully recovering from this ambush. His right arm was badly crippled and hung an inch and a half shorter than the left arm after healing. It was learned later that this attack had been led by a renegade white named Simon Girty who was heard to have proudly boasted how "he had made Squire Boone's shirt tail fly."

In 1781, Bland Ballard, who lived at Linn's Station, eight miles East of Louisville on the Midland Trail leading from the Kentucky River to the Falls of the Ohio, was sent to find a preacher known to live in what is now Bullitt County. Before reaching his destination, he discovered the trail of a large body of Indians. Dashing back to Beargrass and Linn's Stations, he gave the alarm. It was decided that all the other stations in this area should also be warned.

Ballard, who was later a Major and served as a spy and scout for Gen. Clark, made haste to the "Painted Stone." The settlers were loaded up in as many wagons as were available and the men mounted all the horses. Squire Boone and some of his family remained at his fort along with the Hinton family because there were not enough horses to take everybody. On September 14, 1781, the hurriedly organized party left Boone's Station for Louisville. Most never made it. They were set upon at Long Run after making only twelve miles. Few escaped the bloody carnage that followed. Ballard was able to get away and made it to Linn's Station where word was sent over to Col. Floyd at Beargrass. A party of about 30 men was quickly raised and set out the next day, September 15th, probably to bury the dead. Instead they ran into a trap and 16 of the settlers fell before the remainder could escape to the safety of Linn's Station. Floyd and Ballard were both spared, but they feared that Boone's Station was now doomed.

On September 17th, Col. Floyd led out 300 men to meet the Indians. There was none to be found. The dead were buried at Long Run and Floyd's Fork, and the party then proceeded to rescue Squire Boone at "Painted Stone." He was found in good spirits, having seen no Indians and knowing nothing of the terrible massacre. Squire, still suffering from his last wounds at the hands of the Simon Girty ambush, was escorted, along with the other members of his and the Hinton family, to the forts at Louisville. Some two weeks later, Boone slipped back to his station after dark by himself to learn whether or not his fort had been destroyed. Finding it intact, he started back to Louisville, but about midnight decided to sleep near Long Run. He lay down, holding his horse by its reins, and spent the rest of the night until daybreak. Upon awakening, he was alarmed to learn that a number of Indians had camped close to him.

Boone remained in and around Louisville, recuperating and doing some surveying, until he was elected as a representative from Kentucky (then Jefferson County) to the House of Delegates of the Virginia Assembly. Indian activity persisted and Squire moved his family back to Fort Harrod before spending most of the year 1782 in Richmond, Virginia. He told his grandchildren later that this period was the high point of his life. He made vigorous appeals to the Virginia Legislature for the establishment of paid and equipped militiamen. He painted vivid pictures of the slaughter of the western defenders of the Virginia Frontier. Perhaps more eloquent than his simple speeches, however, were the scars he carried, the unhealed and obviously painful wounds that showed in his walk and appearance.

In December of 1782, Squire returned to live a few miles from Fort

Harrod. In the Fall of 1783 he visited his pre-emption at "Painted Stone" along with a party of settlers only to find his cabin and fort burned to the ground. This was a great blow. He returned the next year with a number of settlers to rebuild the station and settle there again. Here followed a period of great land acquisition as Squire fore-saw the impending influx of landholders and homesteaders. The Commonwealth of Kentucky recorded after 1792 in its land records that title to some 10,600 acres belonged to Squire Boone. However, at various times, Squire had surveyed, blazed and made entry in the land courts for more than 58,000 acres! He also during this time built a grist and saw mill at "Painted Stone." He was elected a delegate to the first Kentucky Convention, held at Danville, sitting as a representative from Lincoln County.

Early in the year 1786, he fell into debt and sold his station and tract at "Painted Stone," along with other tracts, to pay his creditors. His lots in Louisville were sold to John Filson, the originator of the Daniel Boone legends. Squire bought Wills Station, three miles West, and moved his family there. Again, he was elected to represent Kentucky at the Virginia Assembly and there ratified the Constitution of the United States. When he returned to Kentucky he found that settlers had moved upon and were claiming many of his land tracts. Better titles were shown than the entries made by Squire. By 1787 he decided to leave Kentucky and seek land elsewhere.

A settlement was attempted by Squire and a small party on the Mississippi River at the mouth of the Yazoo River, near present-day Vicksburg, Mississippi. This intrusion was quickly discouraged by Indians, and Squire moved on to New Orleans, where he opened a gunsmith shop. In 1790 his shop was destroyed by the Spanish and his worldly possessions confiscated. He was perhaps suspected as a spy for the young American government. Returning to Kentucky, he found more of his lands adversely possessed and moved in disgust to Florida where he did well until called to Pennsylvania in 1792 for a family matter which is unexplained except that he was needed and went. He stayed there three years with his wife and relatives.

In 1795, Boone returned to Shelby County, Kentucky, where he joined his son, Jonathan, who was operating the mill. Some land was sold that he still had title to. During the next four years he attempted to straighten out the numerous conflicting claims on his own lands and settle the boundary lines on many tracts he had sold. He accompanied officials of the Shelby County Court to disputed lines and locations, giving depositions for proof of claims. These documents can still be read in the Shelby County Clerk's Office today and make up a large portion of the first official records.

Daniel had moved to Missouri, where Squire joined him, remaining until 1802, when two of his sons persuaded him to return to Kentucky. Sometime afterwards, he was imprisoned in Louisville for debt, but was at length released with the help of friends who had known and still respected him. Times got worse, however, and in spite of all he and his sons could do to hold on here, the avalanche of humanity that swept into Shelby and every other Central Kentucky County brought elements and conditions that were unpleasant for the Boones.

Jonathan, Isaiah, Moses and Enoch accompanied their father and mother out of Kentucky in 1806 to locate in Indiana. A peaceful valley was found some 25 miles northwest of Louisville, and here Boone Township was established. Squire began the construction of a stone house and built a mill near the opening of a good spring at the mouth of a large cave. He took up gunsmithing again and as an old man began cutting verses into the stones of his mill and house. He called his home "Traveler's Rest," and cut the letters into the stone of the house. His biblical background and his religious inclinations were evident in the couplets that can still be seen in this vicinity on stones that have been carried up from the valley and placed into the foundations of more recent homes.

Tired of heavy work in stone, weary of his thousands of miles of traveling the hostile paths of a wilderness country, suffering from the infirmities of battle wounds as well as old age, but still faithful to the God who had guided him safely to a well earned "Traveler's Rest," Squire Boone passed into the ethereal world he had preached about. The sad event occurred in August of 1815 and a great number of family and new friends mourned his death. The body was placed in a walnut box made by Squire himself and buried in a cave where Squire had escaped from Indians as they passed overhead on a long ago hunting trip. The cave was located above and overlooking the valley he settled just three miles across the river from now Brandenburg. It was pilaged by souvenir hunters many years ago, and the Indiana residents there now say that Squire's few remaining bones were moved across the river by Moses Boone and buried in Meade County, Kentucky. The area in Harrison County, Indiana has reverted in modern times to its former sylvan simplicity and lies dormant and undisturbed like a scene out of the wilderness past.

Squire had instructed his sons to camp at the mouth of his burial cave to await proof that life could express itself after death. As his end had approached, he had professed the belief that he could speak to them from the grave. The sons did as their father wished, but no word was heard from the departed spirit of Squire Boone.

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