

F
454
B743

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>



Class F454

Book B743

PRESENTED BY

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>



1

11. 2. 1877

**Life and Adventures
of Daniel Boon**

LIFE AND ADVENTURES
OF
COLONEL DANIEL BOON

THE FIRST WHITE SETTLER
OF THE STATE OF
KENTUCKY

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A Narration of His Latter Life Until His Death

ANNEXED IS AN EULOGY BY
LORD BYRON

Philip Johnson
11



BROOKLYN—PRINTED FOR C. WILDER—1823

F 954
B 1148

No.....of 26 copies printed for Heartman's Historical Series.
Also 51 copies printed for the Daniel Boone Club.

Gift
C. F. Heartman
Dec. 26 '16

LIFE AND ADVENTURES
OF
Colonel DANIEL BOON,

THE FIRST WHITE SETTLER OF THE STATE OF
KENTUCKY.

—COMPRISING—

An account of his first excursion to Kentucky in 1769, then a wild Wilderness, inhabited by no other human beings but Savages—his remove there with his family in 1773—and of his various encounters with the Indians, from the year 1769 to 1782.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A narration of the most important incidents of his life from the latter period, until the period of his death, June 27, 1821, at the advanced age of 90 years—comprising an account of his many extraordinary excursions and hair-breadth escapes, while in pursuit of the wild beasts of the forest, his favorite amusement until the day of his death.

ANNEXED,

Is an Eulogy on Col. Boon, and choice of life, by

LORD BYRON.

—•••••—
BROOKLYN—Printed for C. WILDER—1833.

Colonel Daniel Boon

It was on the first of May 1769, that I resigned my domestic happiness, and left my family and peaceable habitation of the Yadkin river, in North Carolina, to wander through the wilderness of America, in quest of the country of Kentucky, in company with John Finley, John Stuart, Joseph Holden, James Money, and William Cool.

On the 7th of June, after travelling through a mountainous wilderness, in a western direction, we found ourselves on Red River, where John Finley had formerly been trading with the Indians, and, from the top of an eminence, saw with pleasure the beautiful level of Kentucky. For some time we had experienced the most uncomfortable weather. We now encamped, made a shelter to defend us from the inclement season, and began to hunt and reconnoitre the country. We found abundance of wild beasts in this vast forest. The buffaloes were more numerous than cattle on other settlements, browsing on the leaves of the cane, or cropping the herbage on those extensive plains. We saw hundreds in a drove; and the numbers about the salt springs were amazing. In the forest, the habitation of beasts of every American kind, we hunted with great success until December.

On the 22d of December, John Stuart and I had a pleasing ramble; but fortune changed the day at the close of it. We had passed through a great forest, in which stood myriads

of trees, some gay with blossoms, others rich with fruits. Nature was here a series of wonders and a fund of delight. Here she displayed her ingenuity and industry in a variety of flowers and fruits, beautifully coloured, elegantly shaped, and charmingly flavored; and we were diverted with numberless animals, presenting themselves perpetually to our view. In the decline of the day, near Kentucky river, as we ascended the brow of a small hill, a number of Indians rushed out of a thick cane brake, and made us prisoners. The Indians plundered us, and kept us in confinement seven days. During this, we discovered no uneasiness or desire to escape, which made them less suspicious; but in the dead of night, as we lay by a large fire, in a thick cane brake, when sleep had locked up their senses, my situation not disposing me to rest, I gently awoke my companion. We seized this favorable opportunity, and departed, directing our course towards our old camp, but found it plundered, and our company dispersed or gone home.

About this time my brother, Squire Boon, with another adventurer, who came to explore the country shortly after us, was wandering through the forest, and accidentally found our camp. Notwithstanding our unfortunate circumstances, and our dangerous situation, surrounded with hostile savages, our meeting fortunately in the wilderness, gave us the most sensible satisfaction.

Soon after this, my companion in captivity, John Stuart, was killed by the savages: and the man that came with my brother returned home by himself. We were then in a dangerous, helpless situation, exposed daily to perils and death, among savages and wild beasts, not a white man in the country but ourselves.

Thus many hundred miles from our families in the howling wilderness, we did not continue in a state of indolence, but hunted every day, and prepared a little cottage to defend us from the winter storms. We met with no disturbance through the winter.

On the first of May 1770, my brother returned home by himself, for a new recruit of horses and ammunition, leaving me alone, without bread, salt, or sugar, or even a horse or dog. I passed a few days uncomfortably. The idea of a beloved wife and family, and their anxiety on my account, would have disposed me to melancholy, if I had further indulged the thought.

One day I undertook a tour through the country, when the diversity and beauties of nature I met with, in this charming season, expelled every gloomy thought. Just at the close of day, the gentle gales ceased; a profound calm ensued; not a breath shook the tremulous leaf. I had gained the summit of a commanding ridge, and looking round with astonishing delight, beheld the ample plains and beautiful tracts below. On one hand I surveyed the famous Ohio, rolling in silent dignity, and marking the western boundary of Kentucky with inconceivable grandeur. At a vast distance, I beheld the mountains lift their venerable brows, and penetrate the clouds. All things were still. I kindled a fire, near a fountain of sweet water, and feasted on the loin of a buck, which a few hours before I had killed. The shades of night soon overspread the hemisphere, and the earth seemed to gasp after the howering moisture. My excursion had fatigued my body, and amused my mind. I laid me down to sleep, and awoke not until the sun had chased away the night. I continued this tour, and in a few days explored a

considerable part of the country, each day equally pleased as at first after which I returned to my old camp, which had not been disturbed in my absence. I did not confine my lodging to it, but often reposed in thick cane brakes to avoid the savages, who, I believe, often visited my camp, but, fortunately for me, in my absence. 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 in this country.

Until the 27th of July, I spent the time in an uninterrupted scene of sylvan pleasures, when my brother, to my great felicity, met me according to appointment, at our old camp. Soon after we left the place, and proceeded to Cumberland river, reconnoitring that part of the country, and giving names to the different rivers.

In March 1771, I returned home to my family, being determined to bring them as soon as possible, at the risk of my life and fortune, to reside in Kentucky, which I esteemed a second paradise.

On my return I found my family in happy circumstances. I sold my farm at Yadkin, and what goods we could not carry with us; and,

\ On the 25th of September 1773, we bade farewell to our friends, and proceeded on our journey to Kentucky, in company with five more families, and forty men that joined us in Powell's Valley, which is 150 miles from the now settled parts of Kentucky, but this promising beginning was soon overcast with a cloud of adversity.

On the 10th of October, the rear of our company was attacked by a number of Indians, who killed six and wounded one man. Of these my eldest son was one that fell in the

action. Though we repulsed the enemy, yet this unhappy affair scattered our cattle, brought us into extreme difficulty, and so discouraged the whole company, that we retreated forty miles to Clench river. We had passed over two mountains, Powell's and Walden's, and were approaching Cumberland mountain, when this adverse fortune overtook us. These mountains are in the wilderness, in passing from the old settlements in Virginia to Kentucky, are ranged in a south-west and north-east direction, are of great length and breadth, and, not far distant from each other. Over them nature hath formed passes less difficult than might be expected from the view of such huge piles. The aspect of these cliffs is so wild and horrid, that it is impossible to behold them without terror.

Until the sixth of June, 1774, I remained with my family on the Clench when I and Michael Stoner were solicited by governor Dunmore, of Virginia, to conduct a number of surveyors to the falls of Ohio. This was a tour of near eight hundred miles, and took us sixty-two days.

On my return, governor Dunmore gave me the command of three garrisons, during the campaign against the Shawanese.

In March, 1775, at the solicitation of a number of gentlemen, of North-Carolina, I attended their treaty at Wataga, with the Cherokee Indians, to purchase the lands on the south-side of Kentucky river. After this, I undertook to mark out a road in the best passage from the settlements, through the wilderness to Kentucky.

Having collected a number of enterprizing men, well armed, I soon began this work. We proceeded until we came within fifteen miles of where Boonsborough now stands,

where the Indians attacked us, and killed two, and wounded two more.

This was the 20th of March, 1775. Three days after, they attacked us again; we had two killed and three wounded. After this we proceeded on to Kentucky river without opposition.

On the 1st of April, we began to erect the fort of Boonsborough, at a salt-lick, sixty yards from the river, on the south side.

On the 4th, they killed one of our men.

On the 14th of June, having finished the fort, I returned to my family, on the Clench. Soon after I removed my family to the fort; we arrived safe; my wife and daughter being the first white women that stood on the banks of Kentucky river.

December 24th. The Indians killed one man, and wounded another, seeming determined to persecute us for erecting this fort.

July 14th 1776. Two of col. Calway's daughters, and one of mine, were taken prisoners near the fort. I immediately pursued the Indians, with only 18 men.

On the 16th, I overtook them, killed two of them, and recovered the girls.

The Indians had divided themselves into several parties, and attacked, on the same day, all our settlements and forts, doing a great deal of mischief. The husbandman was shot dead in the field, and most of the cattle were destroyed. They continued their hostilities until

The 15th of April, 1777, when a party of 100 of them attacked Boonsborough and killed one man, and wounded four.

July 4th, they attacked it again with 200 men, and killed us one and wounded two. They remained 48 hours, during

which we killed seven of them. All the settlements were attacked at the same time.

July 19th. Col. Logan's fort was besieged by 200 Indians: they did much mischief; there were only fifteen men in the fort; they killed two, and wounded four of them. Indians' loss unknown.

July 25. Twenty-five men came from Carolina. About

August 20th, colonel Bowman arrived with 100 men from Virginia. Now we began to strengthen, and had skirmishes with the Indians almost every day. The savages now learned the superiority of the LONG KNIFE, as they call the Virginians; being outgeneraled in almost every battle. Our affairs began to wear a new aspect; the enemy did not now venture open war, but practised secret mischief.

January 1, 1778. I went with thirty men to the Blue Licks, on Licking river, to make salt for the different garrisons.

February 7th. Hunting by myself, to procure meat for the company, I met a party of 102 Indians and two Frenchmen, marching against Boonsborough. They pursued and took me; and next day I capitulated for my men, knowing they could not escape. They were 27 in number, three having gone home with salt. The Indians, according to the capitulation, used us generously. They carried us to Old Chelicothe, the principal Indian town on Little Miami.

On the 18th of February we arrived there, after an uncomfortable journey, in very severe weather.

On the 10th of March, I and ten of my men were conducted to Detroit.

On the 30th, we arrived there, and were treated by governor Hamilton, the British commander at that post, with great humanity.

The Indians had such an affection for me, that they refused 100l. sterling offered them by the governor, if they would leave me with the others, on purpose that he might send me home on my parole. Several English gentlemen there, sensible of my adverse fortune, and touched with sympathy, generously offered to supply my wants, which I declined with many thanks, adding that I never expected it would be in my power to recompence such unmerited generosity. The Indians left my men in captivity with the British at Detroit.

On the 10th of April, they brought me towards Old Chelicothe, where we arrived on the 25th day of the same month. This was a long and fatiguing march, through an exceeding fertile country, remarkable for fine springs and streams of water. At Chelicothe, I spent my time as comfortable as I could expect; was adopted, according to their custom, into a family, where 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. I often went a hunting with them, 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 countenance and gestures the greatest expressions of joy when they exceeded me; and, when the reverse happened, of envy. The Shawanese king took great notice of me, and treated me with profound respect, and entire friendship, often entrusting me to hunt at my liberty. I frequently returned with the spoils of the woods, and as often presented some of what I had taken to him, ex-



COL. DANIEL BOON,

The first settler of the State of Kentucky

pressive of duty to my sovereign. My food and lodging was in common with them, not so good indeed as I could desire; but necessity made everything acceptable.

I now began to meditate an escape, but carefully avoided giving suspicion.

Until the 1st day of June I continued at Old Chelicothe, and then was taken to the salt springs on Sciota, and kept their ten days making salt. During this time, I had hunted with them, and found the land, for a great extent above this river, to exceed the soil of Kentucky, if possible, and remarkably well watered.

On my return to Chelicothe, four hundred and fifty of the choicest Indian warriors were ready to march against Boonsborough, painted and armed in a fearful manner. This alarmed me, and I determined to escape.

On the 16th of June, before sunrise, I went off secretly, and reaching Boonsborough on the 20th, a journey of one hundred and sixty miles, during which I had only one meal. I found our fortress in a bad state, but we immediately repaired our flanks, gates, posterns, and formed double bastions, which we completed in ten days. One of my fellow prisoners escaping after me, brought advice, that on account of my flight, the Indians had put off their expedition for three weeks.

About August 1st, I set out with 19 men to surprise Point Creek Town on Sciota. Within 4 miles we fell in with 30 Indians going against Boonsborough. We fought, and the enemy gave way. We suffered no loss. The enemy had 1 killed, and 2 wounded. We took 3 horses and all their baggage. The Indians having evacuated their town and gone all together against Boonsborough, we returned, passed them

on the 6th day, and on the 7th arrived safe at Boonsborough.

On the 8th, the Indian army, 444 in number, commanded by capt. Duquesne, and 11 other Frenchmen, and their own chiefs, came and summoned the fort. I requested two days consideration, which they granted. During this, we brought in through the posterns all the horses and other cattle we could collect.

On the 9th, in the evening, I informed their commander, that we were determined to defend the fort, while a man was living. They then proposed a treaty, and said if we sent out 9 men to conclude it, they would withdraw. The treaty was held within 60 yards of the fort, as we suspected the savages. The articles were agreed to and signed; when the Indians told us, it was their custom for 2 Indians to shake hands with every white man in the treaty, as an evidence of friendship. We agreed to this also. They immediately grappled us to take us prisoners, but we cleared ourselves of them, though surrounded by hundreds, and gained the fort safe, except one that was wounded by a heavy fire from their army. On this they began to undermine the fort, beginning at the water-mark of Kentucky river, which is 60 yards from the fort. We discovered this by the water being made muddy with the clay and countermined them by cutting a trench across their subteranean passage. The enemy discovering this, by the clay we threw out of the fort, desisted.

On the 20th of August, they raised the siege.

During this dreadful siege, we had 2 men killed, and 4 wounded. We lost a number of cattle. We killed 37 of the enemy, and wounded a great number. We picked up 125 pounds of their bullets, besides what struck in the logs of the fort.

Soon after this I went into the settlement, and nothing worthy of notice passed for some time.

In July, 1779, during my absence, col. Bowman, with 160 men, went against the Shawanese of Old Chelicothe. He arrived undiscovered; a battle ensued, which lasted until ten in the morning, when col. Bowman retreated 30 miles. The Indians collected all their strength, and pursued him, when another engagement ensued for two hours, not to col. Bowman's advantage. Col. Harrod proposed to mount a number of horses and break the enemy's line, who at this time fought with remarkable fury. This desperate measure had a happy effect, and the savages fled on all sides. In these two battles we had 9 men killed, and 1 wounded. Enemy's loss uncertain, only 2 scalps being taken.

June 22d 1780, about 600 Indians and Canadians, under col. Bird, attacked Riddle's and Martin's station, and the Forks of Licking river, with 6 pieces of artillery. They took all the inhabitants captives, and killed 1 man and 2 women, loaded the others with the heavy baggage; and such as failed in the journey, were tomahawked.

The hostile disposition of the savages, caused gen. Clark, the commandant at the falls of the Ohio, to march with his regiment and the armed force of the country against Peccaway, the principal town of the Shawanese, on a branch of the Great Miami, which he finished with great success, took 17 scalps, and burned the town to ashes, with the loss of 17 men.

About this time, I returned to Kentucky with my family; for, during my captivity, my wife, thinking me killed by the Indians, had transported my family and goods on horses through the wilderness, amidst many dangers, to her father's

house in North Carolina. The history of my difficulties in going and returning, is too long to be inserted here.

On the 6th October 1780, soon after my settling again at Boonsborough, I went with my brother to the Blue Licks, and on our return, he was shot by a party of Indians; they followed me by the scent of a dog, which I shot, and escaped.

The severity of the winter caused great distress in Kentucky, the enemy during the summer having destroyed most of the corn. The inhabitants lived chiefly on Buffaloes' flesh.

In spring 1782, the Indians harrassed us.

In May they killed 1 man at Ashton's station, and took a negro. Capt. Ashton pursued them with 25 men, and in an engagement which lasted 2 hours, his party were obliged to retreat, having 8 killed, and 4 mortally wounded. Their brave commander fell in the action.

August 10th, two boys were carried off from major Hoy's station. Capt. Holder pursued with 17 men: they were also defeated, and lost 4 and 1 wounded. Our affairs became more and more alarming. The savages infested the country, killing men at every opportunity.

In a field near Lexington, an Indian shot a man, and running to scalp him, was himself shot from the fort, and fell dead upon his enemy.

All the Indian nations were now united against us.

August 15th, 500 Indians and Canadians came against Briant's station, 5 miles from Lexington: they assaulted the fort, killed all the cattle round it. But being repulsed, they retired the 3d day, having about 30 killed, their wounded uncertain. The garrison had 4 killed and 3 wounded.

August 18th. Col. Todd, col. Trigg, major Harland, and myself, speedily collected 176 men, well armed, and pursued

the savages. They had marched beyond the Blue Licks to a remarkable bend of the main fork of Licking river, about 43 miles from Lexington, where we overtook them on the 19th.

The savages observing us, gave way, and we, ignorant of their numbers, passed the river. When they saw our proceeding, having greatly the advantage in situation, they formed their line of battle from one bend of the Licking to the other, about a mile from the Blue Licks. The battle was exceedingly fierce for about 15 minutes, when we, being overpowered by numbers, were obliged to retreat, with the loss of 67 men, 7 of whom were taken prisoners. The brave and much lamented colonels Todd and Triggs, major Harland and my second son, were among the dead. We were afterwards told, that the Indians on numbering their dead, finding they had 4 more killed than we, 4 of our people they had taken, were given up to their young warriors to be put to death after their barbarous manner.

On our retreat, we were met by col. Logan, who was hastening to join us, with a number of well armed men. This powerful assistance we wanted on the day of battle. The enemy said, one more fire from us would have made them give way.

I cannot reflect upon this dreadful scene, but sorrow fills my heart. A zeal for the defence of their country led those heroes to the scene of action, though with a few men, to attack a powerful army of experienced warriors. When we gave way, they pursued us with the utmost eagerness, and in every quarter spread destruction. The river was difficult to cross, and many were killed in the flight, some just entering the river, some in the water, others after crossing in ascend-

ing the cliffs. Some escaped on horseback, a few on foot; and being dispersed every where, in a few hours, brought the melancholy news of this unfortunate battle to Lexington. Many widows were now made. The reader may guess what sorrow filled the hearts of the inhabitants, exceeding anything I am able to describe. Being reinforced, we returned to bury the dead, and found their bodies strewn every where, cut and mangled in a dreadful manner. This mournful scene exhibited a horror almost unparalleled; some torn and eaten by wild beasts; those in the river eaten by fishes; all in such a putrified condition, that no one could be distinguished from another.

When gen. Clark at the falls of Ohio, heard of our disaster, he ordered an expedition to pursue the savages; we overtook them within 2 miles of their towns, and we should have obtained a great victory, had not some of them met us when about 200 poles from their camp. The savages fled in the utmost disorder, and evacuated all their towns. We burned to ashes Old Chelicothe, Peccaway, New Chelicothe, Wills Town, and Chelicothe; entirely destroyed their corn and other fruits; and spread desolation through their country. We took 7 prisoners, and 5 scalps, and lost only 4 men, 2 of whom were accidentally killed by ourselves.

This campaign damped the enemy; yet they made secret incursions.

In October, a party attacked Crab Orchard; and one of them, being a good way before the others, boldly entered a house, in which were only a woman and her children, and a negro man. The savage used no violence, but attempted to carry off the negro, who happily proved too strong for him, and threw him on the ground, and in the struggle the woman

cut off his head with an axe, while her little daughter shut the door. The savages instantly came up and applied their tomahawks to the door, when the mother putting an old rusty gun barrel through a crevice, the savages went off.

From that time, until the happy return of peace between the United States and Great Britain, the Indians did us no mischief.

Soon after the Indians desired peace.

Two darling sons, and a brother I have lost by savage hands, which have also taken 40 valuable horses, and an abundance of cattle. Many dark and sleepless nights have I spent, separated from the cheerful society of men, scorched by the summer's sun, and pinched by the winter's cold, an instrument ordained to settle the wilderness. But now the scene is changed: peace crowns the sylvan shade.

DANIEL BOON.

Fayette County, Kentucky.

Continuation of the Life of Colonel Boon

For a continuation of the life of Col. Boon, from the conclusion of the American and Indian Wars, we are indebted to a near relation of the Colonel (a resident of Cincinnati) who received it from his own mouth and whose veracity may be depended on:

As soon as peace was effected and became firmly settled with the savages on the frontiers and they ceased to commit depredations from the eastern and southern States to Kentucky and the other Western States became uncountable great, insomuch that the State of Kentucky alone which in 1769 (when first discovered by Col. Boon) contained not a white inhabitant but himself, in 1790 contained upwards of 100 towns of considerable size, and nearly 100,000 inhabitants—and so great was the increase of population from this period, that in 1807 the State contained 34 Counties, peopled by about 350,000 inhabitants, and the militia at this period were estimated at 32,336.

Although it would be natural to suppose that the circumstances of a State of so great extent and population, having in so short a period grown out of a wild Wilderness inhabited by no other human beings but untutored Savages, must have been highly pleasing and flattering to one who could boast of having been its first Christian settler, yet, with Col. Boon, it appears to have had a quite different effect—habituated to

the chase, which had become his favorite amusement from his first excursion to Kentucky he (like the unrefined Savage) viewed apparently the rapid increase of population with more distrust than satisfaction, as he well knew that it would ultimately drive away the wild animals of the forest (with which the country had when first visited so thickly abounded) and that his favorite pursuit would thereby be diminished and in time totally destroyed. Although his many heroic achievements, in protecting the inhabitants of the infant settlements from the bloody tomahawk and scalping knife of the Savages, were justly and duly appreciated by the most respectable inhabitants of the state, yet all compensations offered him therefor in lands, &c., or lucrative offices proffered him, were unequivocally refused by the Colonel, and although of very decent abilities, (with one exception) he could never be prevailed on to fill a public office—to use his own expression “I had much rather (said he) possess a good fowling piece, with two faithful dogs, and traverse the wilderness with one or two friendly Indian companions, in quest of a hoard of Buffaloes or deer, than to possess the best township or to fill the first Executive office of the State.”

Chilicote was the place selected by Col. Boon as a place of his permanent residence after the conclusion of peace, but at this period so great was the emigration from all quarters to Kentucky, that the Colonel found himself very soon necessitated (the better to enjoy his favorite amusement) to remove to the more remote and uninhabited part of the State—but even in this secluded retreat he did not long enjoy his wished for repose and amusement—the thirst for cheap and

uncultivated lands, so peculiar at this period to the eastern and southern adventurers and speculators, soon brought them into the very neighborhood of his peaceable dwelling—as they approached the wild animals of the forest (like the aborigines) receded, and to enjoy the society of the latter, in preference to that of his fellow countrymen, Col. Boon found himself necessitated to follow their example. At the age of 65 he removed with his family to the Tennessee Country, then almost a perfect Wilderness, where he built him a log cabin, and for several years enjoyed undisturbed repose and realized very bountifully the sought for amusements which of all other he most delighted in—the wilderness of which he was now an inhabitant, abounded with Buffaloes, Bears, Deers, &c., which he had for a very considerable time the exclusive and uninterrupted hunting of and destroying at his pleasure. His cabin was occasionally visited by the Indian hunters, but they were those who had been long acquainted with and entertained the greatest friendship for the Colonel and his family, as like him they were once in peaceable possession of the well stocked wilds of Kentucky, but had been induced voluntarily to relinquish them to those whose habits and manners they could not become reconciled to. It is a remarkable fact that the family of Colonel Boon, which was composed of his wife two sons and a daughter, were not less pleased with a secluded life than himself, the two sons seldom accompanied their father in the chase, but it was an amusement of which they were equally fond, and in their different excursions a strife seemed to prevail between the father and sons which should be most successful in the destruction of the animals of the forest, but in eight instances

of twelve fortune generally decided in favor of the old gentleman, who when a fair shot presented, rarely missed his object.

Accompanied by two faithful dogs, with a fur bag slung under his left arm containing his ammunitions, provisions, &c., he would frequently penetrate the wild wilderness fifty or sixty miles from home, in search of game, even when arising seventy years of age, and seldom did his family obtain any tidings of him until his return. In one instance he remained absent between three and four weeks, his family became alarmed, and his two sons scoured the woods for many miles in search of him, but without any success until the 7th day of their search, when, attracted by the barking of the dogs, they found the old gentleman seated very contentedly in a small temporary hut, with his fowling piece presented through an aperture, watching a deerlick, on one side of his humble dwelling his buffaloe skin was spread on which he reposed at night, and in a corner was a roll of green Deer-Skins to the number of 45 and in a hollow a few rods from the hut was piled the 45 carcasses of these animals, the whole of which had been shot by him at the lick. The sudden and unexpected appearance of his sons appeared to cause him more regret than satisfaction as their presence might serve to defeat his object, which was to make up the round number of fifty skins, with which he then calculated to return in triumph to his family, and exultingly boast of a performance, which surpassed any which his sons could boast of.

The great object of the Colonel appears to have been to live as remote as possible from every white inhabitant, except those of his own family; insomuch that he had been

heard frequently to declare that he would never consent to live within 100 miles of a d——d yankee! Although for many years the State of Tennessee contained but a few families beside his own, and they distantly situated from him, yet after the relapse of some years, the enterprising adventurers of New England, penetrated even to within a few miles of his secluded retreat in that quarter which induced him once more to “pull up stakes” and to remove with his family (in the 80th year of his age) quite to the Missouri. Here he continued to enjoy his favourite amusement undisturbed by those whom he viewed as his greatest foes (the yankees) until within a few hours of his death, which was in June, 1822, at the advanced age of 90. In the month of June, 1818, then in the 86th years of his age, he, accompanied by his faithful dog, started early one morning on one of his hunting excursions, which like to have proved his last. He had penetrated the woods on horseback some distance from his hut, and while engaged in watching a deer lick, and as some supposed, (from the position in which he was found) while in the very act of discharging his rifle, he received a paralytic stroke, from which he never afterward fully recovered. This circumstance gave rise to the following rumour of his death, which was published at the time in a Chelicothe paper:

“Death of Col. Daniel Boon—As he lived so he died with his gun in his hand. We are informed by a gentleman direct from Boon’s settlement on the Missouri, that early in last month Col. Boon rode to a deer lick, seated himself within a blind raised to conceal him from the game—that while sitting thus concealed with his old trusty rifle resting on a log, his face to the breech of his gun his rifle cocked, his finger

to the trigger, one eye shut, the other looking along the barrel through the sights—in this position, without struggle or motion, and of course without pain, he breathed out his last so gently, that when he was found next day by his friends although stiff and cold, he looked as if alive, with his gun in his hand, just in the act of firing. It is not altogether certain, if a buck had come into the range of his gun, which had been the death of thousands, but it might have intuitively obeyed its old employer's mind and discharged itself. This hypothesis being novel we leave the solution to the curious."

After the Colonel had reached the 80th year of his age, and unable by reason of infirmity to pursue the wild animals of the forest, with that dexterity that he was once in the habit of doing, he used to adopt the expedient of tracing the bears to a hollow tree, and by means of smoke, would drive them therefrom, and shoot them as they retreated. In one of these attempts the old gentleman ran a very narrow escape and would no doubt have lost his life, had he not been fortunately attended by one of his Indian companions. It appears that in the course of their excursion they found a tree scratched by the bears climbing up, and the hole in the tree sufficiently large for the reception of the bear; they fell a sapling or small tree against or near the hole, and the Colonel with his fire works and his ammunition bag filled with dry leaves and moss, ascended the tree to communicate fire into the hollow, while the Indian remained at the foot with his musket ready to shoot the bear as soon as he should make his appearance—the bear (which was an uncommonly large one) having withstood the fire and smoke until it could be no longer endured and rendered desperate in consequence of

her young cubs, (of which it appeared that she had two with her in the tree) seized and most shockingly tore with her claws the face and hands of the Colonel, without his being able in any way to defend himself—thus dangerously situated, there was now no other alternative left him but either to suffer his Indian companion to fire at the bear, at the great hazard of his own life, or closely embraced by her, to suffer himself to be precipitated to the ground, a distance of more than 40 feet—of the two expedients he preferred the latter, as it probably would be attended with the least danger, and consequently hugging Bruin with as much firmness as with what he had been embraced by her, he voluntarily gave the leap, bringing the huge monster with him; and what seemed almost incredible, without receiving any other injury than a slight sprain of one of his ankles!—the bear was shot dead the instant she reached the ground by the Indian.

Colonel Boon, although averse to the whites, was a great friend to the Indians, notwithstanding they had been his mortal enemies in the early part of his life—it was frequently remarked by him that while he could never with safety repose confidence in a Yankee, he had never been deceived by an Indian, when he had once declared himself friendly disposed, and that so far as his own experience would enable him to judge, he should certainly prefer a state of nature to a state of civilization, if he was obliged to be confined to one or the other. The subject of the discipline and mode of warfare of savages being once introduced by some gentlemen in company with the Colonel, when the latter being requested to give his opinion relative thereto, he declared it nearly as follows:

“I have often heard the British officers call the Indians the undisciplined savages, which is a capital mistake, as they have all the essentials of discipline. They are under good command, and punctual in obeying orders; they can act in concert, and when their officers lay a plan and give orders, they will cheerfully unite in putting all their directions into immediate execution; and by each man observing the motion or movement of his right hand companion, they can communicate the motion from right to left, and march abreast in concert, and in scattered order, though the line may be more than a mile long, and continue if occasion requires, for a considerable distance, without disorder or confusion. They can perform various necessary manoeuvres, either slowly, or as fast as they can run: they can form a circle, or semi-circle: the circle they make use of, in order to surround their enemy, and the semi-circle if the enemy has a river on one side of them.—They can also form a large hollow square, face out and take trees: this they do, if their enemies are about surrounding them, to prevent being shot from either side of the tree. When they go into battle, they are not loaded or encumbered with many clothes, as they commonly fight naked, save only breech-clouts, leggings and mockasons. There is no such thing as corporeal punishment used, in order to bring them under such good discipline: degrading is the only chastisement, and they are so unanimous in this that it effectually answers the purpose. Their officers plan, order and conduct matters until they are brought into action, and then each man is to fight as though he was to gain the battle himself. General orders are commonly given in time of battle either to advance or retreat, and is done by a shout or

yell, which is well understood, and they retreat or advance in concert. They are generally well equipped, and exceeding expert and active in the use of arms.

“They say that it would be absurd to appoint a man an officer whose skill and courage had never been tried—that all officers should be advanced only according to merit—that no one man should have the absolute command of an army—that a council of officers are to determine when and how an attack is to be made—that it is the business of the officers to lay plans to take every advantage of the enemy—to ambush and surprize them, and to prevent being ambushed and surprized themselves—it is the duty of officers to prepare and deliver speeches to the men, in order to animate and encourage them; and on the march to prevent the men at any time, from getting into a hudde, because if the enemy should surround them in this position, they would be exposed to the enemy’s fire. It is likewise their business at all times to endeavor to annoy the enemy, and save their own men, and therefore ought never to bring on an attack without considerable advantage, or without what appeared to them the sure prospect of victory, and that with the loss of few men: and if at any time they should be mistaken in this, and are like to lose many men by gaining the victory, it is their duty to retreat, and wait for a better opportunity of defeating their enemy, without the danger of losing so many men. Their conduct proves that they act upon these principles, therefore it is, that from Braddock’s war to the present time, they have seldom ever made an unsuccessful attack. The battle at the mouth of the Great Kanhava, is the greatest instance of this; and even then, though the Indians killed about three for one they lost, yet they retreated. The loss

of the Virginians in this action, was seventy killed, and the same number wounded. The Indians lost twenty killed on the field, and eight, who died afterwards, of their wounds. This was the greatest loss of men that I ever know the Indians to sustain in any one battle. They will commonly retreat, if their men are falling fast, they will not stand cutting, like the Highlanders, or other British troops: but this proceeds from a compliance with their rules of war, rather than cowardice. If they are surrounded, they will fight while there is a man of them alive, rather than surrender.

“In contradiction to the report of many travellers, all of which have been tinctured with prejudice, I can assert, that notwithstanding the apparent indifference with which an Indian meets his wife and children after a long absence, an indifference proceeding rather from costum than insensibility, he is not unmindful of the claims either of connubial or parental tenderness.

“Accustomed from their youth to innumerable hardships, to soon become superior to a sense of danger, or the dread of death; and their fortitude, implanted by nature, and nurtured by example, by precept and accident, never experiences a moment’s alley.

“Though slothful and inactive whilst their stores of provision remains unexhausted, and their foes are at a distance, they are indefatigable and persevering in pursuit of their game, or in circumventing their enemies.

“If they are artful and designing, and ready to take every advantage, if they are cool and deliberate in their councils, and cautious in the extreme either of discovering their sentiments, or of revailing a secret, they might at the same time

boast of possessing qualifications of a more animated nature of the sagacity of a hound the penetrating sight of a lynx, the cunning of the fox, the agility of a bounding roe, and the unconquerable fierceness of the tiger.

“In their public characters, as forming part of a community, they possess an attachment for that land to which they belong, unknown to the inhabitants of any other country. They combine, as if they were actuated only by one soul, against the enemies of their nation, and banish from their minds every consideration opposed to this.

“They consult without unnecessary opposition, or without giving way to the excitements of envy or ambition, on the measures necessary to be pursued for the destruction of those who have drawn on themselves their displeasure. No selfish views ever influence their advice, or obstruct their consultations. Nor is it in the power of bribes or threats to diminish the love they bear their country.”

By the foregoing the reader will perceive how greatly prejudiced was Colonel Boon in favour of the tawny inhabitants of the western wilderness; whose manners and habits he did not hesitate to declare to the day of his death, far more agreeable to him than those of a more civilized and refined race. During the two last years of the life of the Colonel, his eye-sight having so far failed him as to prevent his enjoying his long accustomed sport with his rifle, he amused himself in devising means to ensnare and entrap the lesser animals of the forest, such as beavers, racoons, &c.—as the former was an animal that lived mostly in the water, his manner of entrapping them was by laying one small sapling on another, and driving in posts to keep them

from rolling; the upper sapling was raised about eighteen inches, and set so, that on the beaver's touching a string, or a small piece of bark, the sapling would fall and kill it.

Until the infirmities of Colonel Boon became so great as to prevent it, (which was not until he had arrived at the age of foreshore years) it is impossible to describe the agility and perseverance displayed by him while in pursuit of his prey—neither thickets, ditches, torrents, pools, or rivers were sufficient to stop him. Scarcely any device which the ingenuity of man has discovered for ensnaring or destroying the wild animals of the forest was unknown to him. It was not unfrequent, that he associated himself with parties of Indian hunters, (by whom he was much beloved) in their excursions in pursuit of buffaloes, bears, deers, &c. The route they should take for this purpose was generally left for the Colonel to decide. When they had arrived at a place where these creatures usually haunt, they formed themselves into a circle according to their number, and moved onward, endeavouring as they advanced towards the centre to discover the retreats of their prey—by this means, if any lay in the intermediate space, they were sure of arousing them, and bringing them down either with their bows or their guns.—The method of hunting the buffaloe was by forming a circle or square, nearly in the same manner as when hunting for bears—having taken their different stations, they set the grass on fire, when these animals, who are extremely fearful of that element, flying with precipitation before it, great numbers are hemmed in a small compass, and scarcely a single one escapes.

The death of Colonel Boon, (which took place in June 1821) was sudden and unexpected—having that morning left

home for the purpose of visiting his traps, (apparently in as good state of health as he had been for many months previous) and not returning at his usual hour, his sons became alarmed and went in quest of him, and after some considerable search found the poor old man stretched lifeless on the ground within 3 or 4 feet of one of his traps—beside him stood his faithful dog pawing and smelling of the dead body of his master, nor would he quit it until he was forced therefrom—it was supposed that the death of this extraordinary man was occasioned by a fit of apoplexy.

EULOGY
ON COLONEL BOON, AND CHOICE OF LIFE
BY LORD BYRON.

Of all men, saving Sylla the manslayer,
Who passes for, in life and death, most lucky,
Of the great names which in our faces stare,
The Colonel Boon, backwoodsman of Kentucky
Was happiest amongst mortals any where:
For, killing nothing but a bear, or buck, he
Enjoyed the lonely, vigorous, harmless days
Of his old age, in wilds of deepest maze.

Crime came not near him—she is not the child
Of solitude; health shrank not from him—for
Her home is in the rarely trodden wild,
Where if men seek her not, and death be more
Their choice than life, forgive them as beguiled
By habit to what their own hearts abhor—
In cities caged. The present case in point I
Cite is, that Boon lived hunting up to ninety.

And what's still stranger, left behind a name
For which men vainly decimate the throng;
Not only famous, but of that good fame,
Without which glory's but a tavern song—
Simple, serene, the antipodes of shame,
Which hate nor envy e'er could tinge with wrong;
An active hermit, even in age the child
Of nature, or the Man of Ross run wild.

'Tis true he shrank from men even of this nation;
When they built up unto his darling trees,
He moved some hundred miles off for a station
Where there were fewer houses and more ease;
The inconvenience of civilization
Is, that you neither can be pleased nor please;
But where he met the individual man,
He shewed himself as kind as mortal can.

He was not all alone: around him grew
A sylvan tribe of children of the chase,
Whose young unworkened world was ever new;
Nor sword nor sorrow yet had left a trace
On her unwrinkled brow, nor could you view
A frown on nature's or an human face:
The free-born forest found and kept them free,
And fresh as is a torrent or a tree.

And tall and strong and swift of foot were they,
Beyond the dwarfing city's pale abortions,
Because their thoughts had never been the prey
Of care, or gain; the green woods were their portions;
No sinking spirits told them they grew grey,
No fashion made them apes of her distortions;
Simple they were, not savage; and their rifles,
Though very true, were not yet used for trifles.

Motion was in their days, rest in their slumbers,
And cheerfulness the handmaid of their toil;

Nor yet too many nor too few their numbers;
Corruption could not make their hearts her soil;
The lust which stings, the splendor which encumbers,
With the free forester divide no spoil;
Serene, not sullen, were the solitudes
Of this unsighing people of the woods.

THE END

LE N 29

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

<http://stores.ebay.com/Ancestry-Found>

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 570 732 8

