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Daniel Boone, A Native of Bucks County.

BY REV. D. K. TURNER, HARTSVILLE, PA.

(Doylestown Meeting, January 21, 1896).

Perhaps no native of Bucks county has been more celebrated than Daniel Boone. In his day and for a long period afterwards his fame was widely spread through our country. As a pioneer, hunter, explorer of regions untrodden by white men, and forerunner of civilization, he was surpassed by none, who more than a hundred years ago made their way to the pathless regions of the West. He was born in February, 1735, of English parentage, his grandfather, George Boone, having emigrated from Exeter, England, in 1717, with his wife and a large family of children. Daniel's father, Squire Boone, (*Squire* being a Christian name and not a title) in 1728 bought 140 acres of land in New Britain township of Thomas Shute, of Philadelphia, on which property it is probable that the noted son came into life seven years later.

When he was about ten or twelve years old the family removed to Berks county, and located near Reading. That part of the country was then sparsely settled, large tracts were covered with unbroken forests, game was abundant, and in his boyhood he formed and strengthened the taste for hunting, which subsequently characterized him. After remaining there six or seven years his father, encouraged no doubt by Daniel, went to the still more primitive region of central North Carolina, and bought a property not far from the Yadkin river. Here was a field for the young man to cultivate his love of nature, to see her in her wildest aspect, and to roam over mountain, hill and valley, rifle in hand. While in that locality he married Rebecca Bryan, and pursued the occupation of a farmer several years; but in 1761 becoming restless he joined a band of congenial spirits, crossed the Blue Ridge, and explored the head waters of the Tennessee river. A similar expedition followed three years later, along the sources of the Cumberland.

These tours increased the desire, which had been awakened in his mind, to throw off the restraints of artificial civilization and to find a home, where the luxurious usages of refined society would no longer incommode him, and where inequalities of wealth and station would be little regarded. In 1767 a man, who had been far into the western wilderness, returned and depicted in glowing colors the beauty of the region known as Kentucky, its grand forests, undisturbed hunting grounds and fertile soil.

Boone at once formed a resolution to visit it, and if the accounts were true, to cast his lot there. Two years elapsed, however, before he could so arrange his affairs as to make protracted absence from home possible. In 1769 a party of six hardy frontiersmen was formed, who placed themselves under his leadership and set out on the first of May for the almost unknown territory south of the Ohio. Their journey was toilsome and dangerous. The Indians, though nominally subject to Great Britain, were hostile to white men, jealous of their encroachments and disposed to take their lives or force them back east of the mountains. The travelers moved along their lonely way, under the leafy arch above them, with little food but that which their rifles provided, five weeks. On the 7th of June they reached an elevated spot, from which they beheld a wide prospect of the valley of the Kentucky river and its tributaries. There they determined to erect cabins, and from this as a central point, hunt the buffalo and make extensive explorations. Several months passed away in these agreeable employments.

When winter came, having seen no Indians, though continually on the watch for them, they separated into three parties, Boone and a single companion, whose name was Stewart, remaining together. On the 22nd of December these two men were surprised by the savages, robbed of all their valuables, and held prisoners a week, when they contrived to elude the vigilance of their captors and escape by night.

In January, Daniel's brother, Squire Boone, and another hunter from North Carolina, arrived, bringing tidings of their families and welcome additions to their diminishing supplies

of powder and lead. It was not long before they were again attacked by Indians. Stewart was shot and scalped, the man who came with Squire was lost in the woods and the two brothers were left alone in the boundless forest. In the spring Squire went home for supplies, and Daniel continued with no companion, without bread, salt or sugar, taking care of and adding to their furs, until the middle of summer, when the solitary exile was cheered by his brother's return. During the following autumn and winter they explored other parts of Kentucky and found it most attractive and desirable for a permanent abode.

In March, 1771, they packed their horses with valuable peltry and retraced their steps eastward across the Alleghenies to Yadkin. Daniel had been away from his family two years, in which he had seen no human being but his few companions and hostile savages. In spite of the dangers crafty and treacherous foes presented, he determined to emigrate to the new country as soon as he could sell his farm and properly arrange his business. This was accomplished in about two years, and in the fall of 1773 he and his brother, with their families, turned their faces toward the setting sun. On the way they were joined by five families and forty armed men, and thus strengthened they moved forward cautiously but with new courage. They had reached a valley near the southeast corner of Virginia, when they were suddenly attacked by Indians. Six of the party were killed, among whom was James Boone, Daniel's son and they were compelled to retreat forty miles to the Clinch river.

Deeming it unsafe to penetrate further into the haunts of the aborigines that season, they remained in that locality till June, 1774. Boone was then requested by Governor Dunmore to go to Kentucky and conduct on their route home a party of government surveyors. This enterprise was successfully carried through, in which he was occupied two months and traveled on foot 800 miles. His reputation for shrewdness, caution and daring in border warfare was now fully established, and he was chosen to command, with the rank of captain, three separate garrisons of soldiers in outposts for the defence of the frontier

against the Shawnees and other allied tribes. He fought and defeated those marauding and merciless foes in several battles and drove them to their wigwams north of the Ohio. In 1775 he was engaged by the Transylvania Company to open a road between the Holston and Kentucky rivers. The danger of meeting stealthy and enraged savages was imminent at every step, but the work was energetically pushed forward and completed, and in April a fort and incipient town were built on the Kentucky and named Boonesborough. Harrodsburg was founded soon after, and the permanent occupation of the territory by civilized man was begun. In a few months he removed his family to the new settlements, and his wife and daughters were the first white females ever seen on the banks of the Kentucky. About a year after their arrival one of his daughters and two of her companions one afternoon went rowing on the river. They amused themselves for some time dashing the water with their paddles, and failed to observe that they were being drifted by the current toward the shore opposite their home. But sharp eyes were watching them from the bushes, and as they floated nearer, five Indians seized the canoe, drew it out of view of the fort, and carried off its light hearted occupants prisoners. Their cries for help aroused the garrison, but Boone and Callaway, the fathers of the two girls, were absent, and nothing decisive could be done for their rescue that night. On the return of the men late in the evening preparations were made to pursue their captors next morning, and we may imagine, that little sleep was taken by their anxious parents, as the hours of darkness slowly rolled away. Ere the sun was up a party of armed men was on the trail of the savages, and followed it with so much rapidity, that they overtook them about midday, as they were about to cook a meal. So sudden was the attack that the wily foe was surprised and overpowered, before they had time to kill their prisoners, as was their custom in similar circumstances.

Boone was a skillful military commander as well as a successful hunter. During the whole of the Revolutionary War the British incited the Indians to acts of murder and rapine along the border, and he was employed with his command much of the time, especially in 1777, in defending the settlers. Inter-

course with the eastern part of the country was infrequent and attended with great difficulty. Many of the comforts and all of the luxuries of life were extremely scarce. Even salt was not to be had for weeks or months. There were salt springs at a place called the "Blue Licks," where deer, elk, and buffalo were wont to resort to obtain it, and it might be made there by the slow process of boiling, but at the peril of nocturnal incursions of sneaking redskins. To secure this almost indispensable article Boone formed and commanded a party in the dead of winter 1778, who proceeded to the saline springs and had been there a month when, being a little distance from camp, he was surrounded and captured by a hundred Indians. Thoroughly acquainted with Indian customs, in a short time he won their regard to such an extent as to gain favorable terms for his party, whose lives were to be spared and they were to be treated as prisoners of war. He was taken to Detroit, then under British control, and was honorably received by the commander of the district, but strictly watched. Sharp as the savages, he resolved to escape, and with this in view asked to be adopted into the tribe, suffered his hair to be pulled out, except the lock on top of his head, and was painted like a brave. He was allowed at certain times to hunt, and often returned to his "durance vile," making no attempt to leave. But after being with the dusky warriors five months he went one day with his rifle into the woods, and when out of sight started for his home, 160 miles distant.

With no guide but the sun and stars, he had little fear of losing his way, and was anxious only about crossing the Ohio, as he was not an adept at swimming. When he came to the river, after some searching, he found an old canoe, in which he got safely over, and reached Boonesborough in five days from the time he set out. All his friends supposed he had perished, and his wife and children, under that idea, had returned to North Carolina. He warned the garrison that they would soon be attacked, and the fort was immediately put into the best possible state of defence. Not without reason, for in a few weeks nearly 500 Indians under British officers appeared and began a siege. Ere long they called upon the intrepid hero to

surrender. He refused and bid them do their worst. A furious attempt was made to storm the fort, but it was repulsed with bravery and success, though the defenders numbered less than a sixth part of the assailants, and the enemy, after a loss of nearly forty killed and many more wounded became disheartened, and filed off to the north. For his eminent services in the late military operations Boone was promoted to be major. About this time he went to North Carolina to join his family, from whom he had been separated almost a year.

In 1779 he sold his property and invested the proceeds in Continental money, then passing at a heavy discount, intending to convert it into land-warrants, and to locate them in Kentucky. Others with a similar purpose intrusted to him large sums, having perfect confidence in his integrity. Nor did he betray his trust, but on his way to Richmond, where the sessions of commissioners to adjudicate western land titles were held, he was robbed of the whole, amounting to about \$20,000. If this unfortunate reverse had not occurred, he would have become a large proprietor of real estate in one of the most fertile parts of the Union.

He returned with his family to Boonesborough in 1780. During that summer, while hunting with one of his brothers, the latter was killed and scalped by Indians, and he himself came near meeting the same fate. A body of militia formed to chastise the prowling foe, advanced into their neighborhood, and in spite of his earnest remonstrances were enticed into an ambuscade and attacked. In the engagement he lost a son, and another brother was wounded. About that time he was raised to the rank of Colonel.

For ten years after the close of the Revolutionary struggle he was occupied in agriculture and occasional hunting. In 1792, when Kentucky was admitted into the Union, and the legality of claims to real estate was investigated, his titles were declared invalid and he was reduced to penury. He was now about sixty years old, and had spent the best part of his life in exploring that magnificent inheritance and repelling the incursions of barbarous tribes, yet he was destitute of an acre he could call his own. He became embittered against officers and courts,

that are often used by the unscrupulous and grasping to defraud the unwary, and determined to place himself where he would be less likely to suffer from a similar cause. His hopes turned towards Missouri and in 1795 he removed to the Osage river fifty miles west of St. Louis. That country then belonged to Spain and was frequently called Upper Louisiana. Col. Boone was everywhere known as an able officer and a shrewd manager of Indian affairs, and in 1800 he was appointed commander of the Osage district, and as a compensation for his services in that capacity he was allotted 8,500 acres of rich land near the Missouri river. But it was necessary that he should appear before the Spanish Commissioner in New Orleans and have his title ratified by the highest authority. He put off attending to the matter from day to day, and finally neglected it altogether, and lost a baronial manor which would have enriched himself and his children. When he left Kentucky he was not only poor, but in debt, and though several hundred miles from his former home, he had no disposition to avoid paying his creditors. Farming, then as now, brought little money. The only source from which he could secure cash, was from furs obtained by hunting, and in this for several years he had meagre success. At length by getting a considerable supply of fine peltry his purse was moderately replenished, and he made a trip to Boonesborough, paid all persons the sums they said he owed them, and made his way back to the Osage with but half-a-dollar in his pocket. Then he declared he was ready to die content.

In 1812, when 77 years old, he had a claim to 850 acres of land, the title to which was defective, and he was in danger of losing it. Missouri was then in the area of the U. S., and a petition was presented to Congress, recommended by the Legislature of Kentucky, and supported by many influential men, that the possession of this tract should be confirmed to him. In view of his valor and courage, and the toilsome and perilous labors he had gone through in defence of the infant settlements of the Mississippi valley, favorable action was taken and the request was granted, a token that Republics are not always ungrateful. This property he enjoyed ten years until the close

of his life, which took place in 1822, in his 88th year. He was laid to rest beside his wife, who died seven years previously, in a coffin, which he had provided for himself, and which he kept under his bed, perhaps with a desire to follow the precept, "Memento Mori." A large number of children, grandchildren and other descendants to the fifth generation followed his remains to the grave.

Francis Parkman in his interesting volume, "The Oregon Trail," says that he was furnished in 1846 with a horse by his "friend Mr. Boone of Westport, a grandson of Daniel Boone, the pioneer." And when the author had advanced in his tour far toward the Rocky Mountains, he states that he overtook a party of emigrants on their way to the Pacific Coast. I quote his language:

"Conspicuous among the rest stood three tall young men, grandsons of Daniel Boone. They had clearly inherited the adventurous character of that prince of pioneers, but I saw no signs of the quiet and tranquil spirit that so remarkably distinguished him. Fearful was the fate that months after overtook some of the members of that party. General Kearney on his late return from California brought back their story. They were interrupted by the deep snows among the mountains and, maddened by cold and hunger, fed upon each others' flesh."

Whether any or all of those three young men perished in that way, we are not informed.

A portrait of Col. Daniel Boone, which now adorns the walls of the State House, in Frankfort, Kentucky, was painted by Chester Harding, an eminent American artist, about two years before the veteran's death. It was long deemed appropriate by the citizens of Kentucky that a monument should be erected to his memory in the Capital of the State, of which he was one of the principal founders, and in 1845 this was accomplished, and the bodies of himself and his wife were removed from Missouri and deposited in the cemetery of that city with imposing ceremonies.

Col. Daniel Boone was a noble man, of whom the country that gave him birth may well be proud. Many cities contended for the honor of the nativity of Homer, and we may be congratulated that one so brave, energetic, persistent and patriotic commenced his career among us in Bucks county. His education was limited,

but he possessed a strong mind and commanded a powerful influence wherever he went.

The minute forms of a highly developed social and legal system were repugnant to him, yet he had few if any superiors in the virtues that adorn the head of a family or constitute a worthy citizen. As a husband and father he was beyond reproach. Subtle and cunning in warfare with the savages, he was too unsuspecting and guileless in his dealings with civilized men. Perfectly honest, he wronged no man but often suffered himself to be wronged. To no one are the exploration and settlement of our country west of the Alleghenies and south of the Ohio more indebted than to the hero, Daniel Boone.

The Battle of Fair Oaks.

BY GEN. W. W. H. DAVIS, DOYLESTOWN, PA.

(Doylestown Meeting, January 21, 1896).

As our wonderful war for the Union was closed almost a third of a century ago, and has passed into history, the paper I present, "The Story of a Battle," is pertinent to the occasion.

And what is a battle? Who can fully realize it, without having been actually present and engaged in such a conflict, and looked upon the awful surroundings?

Not one!

As a matter of fact a battle is the transforming of human beings, created in the image of their Maker, into brutes and savages; it arouses their fiercest passions, and, when the combatants are fully warmed up to their work they have no other thought but to kill.

This seems impossible to those who have always lived within the influence of Christian civilization, where the tenderest emotions of the soul are brought out; nevertheless it is true, and my statement is only the epitome of a battle in a few lines.

To paint the picture as I have it on my mind, I'll reproduce, as near as I can, what I saw at "Fair Oaks," the first great battle in front of Richmond. But, before doing this, permit me to occupy a few paragraphs in conducting my regiment to the scene of conflict.