

= Daniel Boone =

Daniel Boone (November 2 , 1734 [O.S. October 22] ? September 26 , 1820) was an American pioneer , explorer , woodsman , and frontiersman , whose frontier exploits made him one of the first folk heroes of the United States . Boone is most famous for his exploration and settlement of what is now Kentucky , which was then part of Virginia , but on the other side of the mountains from the settled areas . As a young adult , Boone supplemented his farm income by hunting and trapping game , and selling their pelts in the fur market . Through this occupational interest , Boone first learned the easy routes to the area . Despite some resistance from American Indian tribes such as the Shawnee , in 1775 , Boone blazed his Wilderness Road through the Cumberland Gap in the Appalachian Mountains from North Carolina and Tennessee into Kentucky . There , he founded the village of Boonesborough , Kentucky , one of the first American settlements west of the Appalachians . Before the end of the 18th century , more than 200 @, @ 000 Americans migrated to Kentucky / Virginia by following the route marked by Boone .

Boone was a militia officer during the Revolutionary War (1775 ? 83) , which , in Kentucky , was fought primarily between the American settlers and the British @-@ aided Indians . Boone was captured by Shawnee warriors in 1778 . He escaped and alerted Boonesborough that the Shawnees were planning an attack . Although heavily outnumbered , Americans repelled the Shawnee warriors in the Siege of Boonesborough . Boone was elected to the first of his three terms in the Virginia General Assembly , during the Revolutionary War , and fought in the Battle of Blue Licks in 1782 . Blue Licks , a Shawnee victory over the Patriots , was one of the last battles of the Revolutionary War , coming after the main fighting ended in October 1781 .

Following the war , Boone worked as a surveyor and merchant , but fell deeply into debt through failed Kentucky land speculation . Frustrated with the legal problems resulting from his land claims , in 1799 , Boone emigrated to eastern Missouri , where he spent most of the last two decades of his life (1800 ? 20) .

Boone remains an iconic figure in American history . He was a legend in his own lifetime , especially after an account of his adventures was published in 1784 by John Filson , making him famous across Europe as the typical all @-@ American frontiersman . An American edition made him equally famous across the United States . After his death , he was frequently the subject of heroic tall tales and works of fiction . His adventures ? real and legendary ? were influential in creating the archetypal Western hero of American folklore . In American popular culture , he is remembered as one of the foremost early frontiersmen . The epic Daniel Boone mythology often overshadows the historical details of his life .

= = Youth = =

Daniel Boone was of English and Welsh ancestry . Because the Gregorian calendar was adopted during his lifetime , Boone 's birth date is sometimes given as November 2 , 1734 (the " New Style " date) , although Boone used the October date . The Boone family belonged to the Religious Society of Friends , called " Quakers " , and were persecuted in England for their dissenting beliefs . Daniel 's father , Squire (his first name , not a title) Boone (1696 ? 1765) emigrated from the small town of Bradninch , Devon (near Exeter , England) to Pennsylvania in 1713 , to join William Penn 's colony of dissenters . Squire Boone 's parents , George Boone III and Mary Maugridge , followed their son to Pennsylvania in 1717 , and in 1720 built a log cabin at Boonecroft .

In 1720 , Squire Boone , who worked primarily as a weaver and a blacksmith , married Sarah Morgan (1700 ? 77) . Sarah 's family were Quakers from Wales , and had settled in Towamencin Township , Montgomery County , Pennsylvania in 1708 . In 1731 , the Boones moved to the Oley Valley , near the modern city of Reading . There they built a log cabin , partially preserved today as the Daniel Boone Homestead . Daniel Boone was born there , the sixth of 11 children .

Daniel Boone spent his early years on what was then the edge of the Pennsylvania frontier . Several Lenape Indian villages were nearby . The pacifist Pennsylvania Quakers had good relations with the Indians , but the steady growth of the white population compelled many Indians to move

further west . Boone was given his first rifle at the age of 12 , as families depended on hunting for much of their food . He learned to hunt from both local settlers and the Lenape . Folk tales have often emphasized Boone 's skills as a hunter . In one story , the young Boone was hunting in the woods with some other boys , when the howl of a panther scattered all but Boone . He calmly cocked his rifle and shot the predator through the heart just as it leaped at him . The validity of this claim is contested , but the story was told so often that it became part of his popular image .

In Boone 's youth , his family became a source of controversy in the local Quaker community when two of the oldest children married outside the endogamous community , in present @-@ day Lower Gwynedd Township , Pennsylvania . In 1742 , Boone 's parents were compelled to publicly apologize after their eldest child , Sarah , married John Willcockson , a " worldling " (non @-@ Quaker) . Because the young couple had " kept company " , they were considered " married without benefit of clergy " . When the Boones ' oldest son Israel married a " worldling " in 1747 , Squire Boone stood by him . Both men were expelled from the Quakers ; Boone 's wife continued to attend monthly meetings with their younger children .

= = Yadkin River Valley , North Carolina = =

In 1750 , Squire Boone sold his land and moved the family to North Carolina . Daniel Boone did not attend church again . He identified as a Christian and had all of his children baptized . The Boones eventually settled on the Yadkin River , in what is now Davie County , about two miles (3 km) west of Mocksville . This was in the western backwoods area .

Because he grew up on the frontier , Boone had little formal education , but deep knowledge of the woods . According to one family tradition , a schoolteacher once expressed concern over Boone 's education , but Boone 's father said , " Let the girls do the spelling and Dan will do the shooting . " Boone received some tutoring from family members , though his spelling remained unorthodox . The historian John Mack Faragher cautions that the folk image of Boone as semiliterate is misleading , and argues that he " acquired a level of literacy that was the equal of most men of his times . " Boone regularly took reading material with him on his hunting expeditions ? the Bible and Gulliver 's Travels were favorites . He was often the only literate person in groups of frontiersmen . Boone would sometimes entertain his hunting companions by reading to them around the evening campfire .

= = = French and Indian War = = =

After the French and Indian War (1754 ? 1763) broke out between the French and British , and their respective Indian allies , North Carolina Governor Matthew Rowan called up a militia , into whose service Daniel volunteered . He served under Captain Hugh Waddell on the North Carolina frontier . Waddell 's unit was assigned to serve in the command of General Edward Braddock in 1755 , and Boone acted as a wagoner , along with his cousin Daniel Morgan , who would later be a key general in the American Revolution . In the Battle of the Monongahela , the denouement of the campaign and a bitter defeat for the British , Boone narrowly escaped death when the baggage wagons were assaulted by Indian troops . Boone remained critical of Braddock 's blunders for the rest of his life .

While on the campaign , Boone met John Finley , a packer who worked for George Croghan in the trans @-@ Appalachian fur trade . Finley first interested Boone in the abundance of game and other natural wonders of the Ohio Valley . Finley took Boone on his first fateful hunting trip to Kentucky 12 years later .

= = = Marriage and family = = =

Boone returned home and on August 14 , 1756 , he married Rebecca Bryan , a neighbor in the Yadkin River Valley whose brother married one of Boone 's sisters . The couple initially lived in a cabin on his father 's farm . They eventually had 10 children . His son , Nathan Boone , was the first

white man born in Kentucky .

Boone supported his growing family in these years as a market hunter and trapper , collecting pelts for the fur trade . Almost every autumn , Boone would go on " long hunts " , extended expeditions into the wilderness lasting weeks or months . Boone went alone or with a small group of men , accumulating hundreds of deer skins in the autumn , and trapping beaver and otter over the winter . The hunt followed a network of bison migration trails , known as the Medicine Trails . When the long hunters returned in the spring , they sold their take to commercial fur traders .

Such frontiersmen often carved messages on trees or wrote their names on cave walls , and Boone 's name or initials have been found in many places . One on a tree in present Washington County , Tennessee reads " D. Boon Cilled a . Bar [killed a bear] on [this] tree in the year 1760 " . A similar carving , preserved in the museum of the Filson Historical Society in Louisville , Kentucky , reads " D. Boon Kilt a Bar , 1803 . " The inscriptions may also be among numerous forgeries of the famous trapper , part of a long tradition of phony Boone relics .

= = = Cherokee conflict , temporary move to Virginia = = =

In 1758 , a conflict erupted between the British forces and the Cherokee , their allies in the French and Indian War (which continued in other parts of the continent) . After the Yadkin River Valley was raided by Cherokee , the Boones and many other families fled north to Culpeper County , Virginia . Boone served in the North Carolina militia during this " Cherokee Uprising " . His militia expeditions deep into Cherokee territory beyond the Blue Ridge Mountains separated him from his wife for about two years .

In 1762 , Boone , his wife and four children moved back to the Yadkin River Valley from Culpeper . By the mid @-@ 1760s , with peace made with the Cherokee , colonial immigration into the area increased . The competition of new settlers decreased the amount of game available . Boone had difficulty making ends meet ; he was often taken to court for nonpayment of debts . He sold his land to pay off creditors . After his father 's death in 1765 , Boone traveled with his brother Squire and a group of men to Florida , which had become British territory after the end of the war , to look into the possibility of settling there . According to a family story , Boone purchased land near Pensacola , but Rebecca refused to move so far away from her friends and family . The Boones moved to a more remote area of the Yadkin River Valley , and Boone began to hunt westward into the Blue Ridge Mountains .

= = Kentucky = =

Boone first reached Kentucky in the fall of 1767 while on a long hunt with his brother Squire Boone , Jr . Boone 's first steps in Kentucky were near present @-@ day Elkhorn City . While on the Braddock expedition years earlier , Boone had heard about the fertile land and abundant game of Kentucky from fellow wagoner John Findley , who had visited Kentucky to trade with American Indians . Boone and Findley happened to meet again , and Findley encouraged Boone with more tales of Kentucky . At the same time , news had arrived about the Treaty of Fort Stanwix , in which the Iroquois had ceded their claim to Kentucky to the British . This , as well as the unrest in North Carolina due to the Regulator Movement , likely prompted Boone to extend his exploration .

On May 11 , 1769 , Boone began a two @-@ year hunting expedition in Kentucky . On December 22 , 1769 , a fellow hunter and he were captured by a party of Shawnees , who confiscated all of their skins and told them to leave and never return . The Shawnees had not signed the Stanwix treaty , and since they regarded Kentucky as their hunting ground , they considered white hunters there to be poachers . Boone , however , continued hunting and exploring Kentucky until his return to North Carolina in 1771 , and returned to hunt there again in the autumn of 1772 .

On September 25 , 1773 , Boone packed up his family and , with a group of about 50 immigrants , began the first attempt by British colonists to establish a settlement in Kentucky . Boone was still an obscure hunter and trapper at the time ; the most prominent member of the expedition was William Russell , a well @-@ known Virginian and future brother @-@ in @-@ law of Patrick Henry . On

October 9 , Boone 's eldest son James and a small group of men and boys who had left the main party to retrieve supplies were attacked by a band of Delawares , Shawnees , and Cherokees . Following the Treaty of Fort Stanwix , American Indians in the region had been debating what to do about the influx of settlers . This group had decided , in the words of historian John Mack Faragher , " to send a message of their opposition to settlement " . James Boone and William Russell 's son Henry were captured and gruesomely tortured to death . The brutality of the killings sent shock waves along the frontier , and Boone 's party abandoned its expedition .

The massacre was one of the first events in what became known as Dunmore 's War , a struggle between Virginia and , primarily , Shawnees of the Ohio Country for control of what is now West Virginia and Kentucky . In the summer of 1774 , Boone volunteered to travel with a companion to Kentucky to notify surveyors there about the outbreak of war . The two men journeyed more than 800 miles (1 @, @ 300 km) in two months to warn those who had not already fled the region . Upon his return to Virginia , Boone helped defend colonial settlements along the Clinch River , earning a promotion to captain in the militia , as well as acclaim from fellow citizens . After the brief war , which ended soon after Virginia 's victory in the Battle of Point Pleasant in October 1774 , the Shawnees relinquished their claims to Kentucky .

Following Dunmore 's War , Richard Henderson , a prominent judge from North Carolina , hired Boone to travel to the Cherokee towns in present North Carolina and Tennessee and inform them of an upcoming meeting . In the 1775 treaty , Henderson purchased the Cherokee claim to Kentucky to establish a colony called Transylvania . Afterwards , Henderson hired Boone to blaze what became known as the Wilderness Road , which went through the Cumberland Gap and into central Kentucky . Along with a party of about 30 workers , Boone marked a path to the Kentucky River , where he founded Boonesborough . Other settlements , notably Harrodsburg , were also established at this time . Despite occasional Indian attacks , Boone returned to the Clinch Valley and brought his family and other settlers to Boonesborough on September 8 , 1775 .

= = American Revolution = =

Violence in Kentucky increased with the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War (1775 ? 1783) . Native Americans who were unhappy about the loss of Kentucky in treaties saw the war as a chance to drive out the colonists . Isolated settlers and hunters became the frequent target of attacks , convincing many to abandon Kentucky . By late spring of 1776 , fewer than 200 colonists remained in Kentucky , primarily at the fortified settlements of Boonesborough , Harrodsburg , and Logan 's Station .

On July 14 , 1776 , Boone 's daughter Jemima and two other teenaged girls were captured outside Boonesborough by an Indian war party , who carried the girls north towards the Shawnee towns in the Ohio country . Boone and a group of men from Boonesborough followed in pursuit , finally catching up with them two days later . Boone and his men ambushed the Indians while they were stopped for a meal , rescuing the girls and driving off their captors . The incident became the most celebrated event of Boone 's life . James Fenimore Cooper created a fictionalized version of the episode in his classic novel *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) .

In 1777 , Henry Hamilton , a British Lieutenant Governor of Canada , began to recruit American Indian war parties to raid the Kentucky settlements . On April 24 , Shawnee Indians led by Chief Blackfish attacked Boonesborough . Boone was shot in the ankle while outside the fort , but he was carried back inside amid a flurry of bullets by Simon Kenton , a recent arrival at Boonesborough . Kenton became Boone 's close friend , as well as a legendary frontiersman in his own right .

While Boone recovered , Shawnees kept up their attacks outside Boonesborough , destroying the surrounding cattle and crops . With the food supply running low , the settlers needed salt to preserve what meat they had , so in January 1778 , Boone led a party of 30 men to the salt springs on the Licking River . On February 7 , 1778 , when Boone was hunting meat for the expedition , he was surprised and captured by warriors led by Blackfish . Because Boone 's party was greatly outnumbered , Boone returned the next day with Blackfish and persuaded his men to surrender rather than put up a fight .

Blackfish wanted to continue to Boonesborough and capture it , since it was now poorly defended , but Boone convinced him that the women and children were not hardy enough to survive a winter trek . Instead , Boone promised that Boonesborough would surrender willingly to the Shawnees the following spring . Boone did not have an opportunity to tell his men that he was bluffing to prevent an immediate attack on Boonesborough , however . Boone pursued this strategy so convincingly that many of his men concluded that he had switched his loyalty to the British .

Boone and his men were taken to Blackfish 's town of Chillicothe , where they were made to run the gauntlet . As was their custom , the Shawnees adopted some of the prisoners into the tribe to replace fallen warriors ; the remainder were taken to Hamilton in Detroit . Boone was adopted into a Shawnee family at Chillicothe , perhaps into the family of Chief Blackfish himself , and given the name Sheltowee (Big Turtle) . On June 16 , 1778 , when he learned Blackfish was about to return to Boonesborough with a large force , Boone eluded his captors and raced home , covering the 160 miles (260 km) to Boonesborough in five days on horseback and , after his horse gave out , on foot .

During Boone 's absence , his wife and children (except for Jemima) had returned to North Carolina , assuming he was dead . Upon his return to Boonesborough , some of the men expressed doubts about Boone 's loyalty , since after surrendering the salt @-@ making party , he had apparently lived quite happily among the Shawnees for months . Boone responded by leading a preemptive raid against the Shawnees across the Ohio River , and then by helping to successfully defend Boonesborough against a 10 @-@ day siege led by Blackfish , which began on September 7 , 1778 .

After the siege , Captain Benjamin Logan and Colonel Richard Callaway ? both of whom had nephews who were still captives surrendered by Boone ? brought charges against Boone for his recent activities . In the court martial that followed , Boone was found " not guilty " , and was even promoted after the court heard his testimony . Despite this vindication , Boone was humiliated by the court martial , and he rarely spoke of it .

After the trial , Boone returned to North Carolina to bring his family back to Kentucky . In the autumn of 1779 , a large party of emigrants came with him , including (according to tradition) the family of Abraham Lincoln 's grandfather . Rather than remain in Boonesborough , Boone founded the nearby settlement of Boone 's Station . He began earning money at this time by locating good land for other settlers . Transylvania land claims had been invalidated after Virginia created Kentucky County , so settlers needed to file new land claims with Virginia . In 1780 , Boone collected about \$ 20 @,@ 000 in cash from various settlers and traveled to Williamsburg to purchase their land warrants . While he was sleeping in a tavern during the trip , the cash was stolen from his room . Some of the settlers forgave Boone the loss ; others insisted he repay the stolen money , which took him several years to do .

A popular image of Boone which emerged in later years is that of the backwoodsman who had little affinity for " civilized " society , moving away from places like Boonesborough when they became " too crowded " . In reality , however , Boone was a leading citizen of Kentucky at this time . When Kentucky was divided into three Virginia counties in November 1780 , Boone was promoted to lieutenant colonel in the Fayette County militia . In April 1781 , he was elected as a representative to the Virginia General Assembly , which was held in Richmond . In 1782 , he was elected sheriff of Fayette County .

Meanwhile , the American Revolutionary War continued . Boone joined General George Rogers Clark 's invasion of the Ohio country in 1780 , fighting in the Battle of Piqua on August 7 . In October , when Boone was hunting with his brother Ned , Shawnees shot and killed Ned . Apparently thinking that they had killed Daniel Boone , the Shawnees beheaded Ned and took the head home as a trophy . In 1781 , Boone traveled to Richmond to take his seat in the legislature , but British dragoons under Banastre Tarleton captured Boone and several other legislators near Charlottesville . The British released Boone on parole several days later . During Boone 's term , Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown in October 1781 , but the fighting continued in Kentucky unabated . Boone returned to Kentucky and in August 1782 fought in the Battle of Blue Licks , in which his son Israel was killed . In November 1782 , Boone took part in another Clark expedition into Ohio , the last

major campaign of the war .

= = Businessman on the Ohio River = =

After the Revolution , Boone resettled in Limestone (renamed Maysville , Kentucky in 1786) , then a booming Ohio River port . In 1787 , he was elected to the Virginia state assembly as a representative from Bourbon County . In Maysville , he kept a tavern and worked as a surveyor , horse trader , and land speculator . He was initially prosperous , owning seven slaves by 1787 , a relatively large number for Kentucky at the time . Boone became a celebrity while living in Maysville . In 1784 , on his 50th birthday , historian John Filson published *The Discovery , Settlement And present State of Kentucke* , a book which included a chronicle of Boone 's adventures .

The Revolutionary War had ended , but the border war with American Indians north of the Ohio River resumed with the Northwest Indian War . In September 1786 , Boone took part in a military expedition into the Ohio Country led by Benjamin Logan . Back in Limestone , Boone housed and fed Shawnees who were captured during the raid , and helped to negotiate a truce and prisoner exchange . Although the war escalated and would not end until the American victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 , the 1786 expedition was the last time Boone saw military action .

Boone began to have financial troubles while living in Maysville . According to the later folk image , Boone the trailblazer was too unsophisticated for the civilization which followed him and which eventually defrauded him of his land . Boone was not the simple frontiersman of legend , however : he engaged in land speculation on a large scale , buying and selling claims to tens of thousands of acres . The land market in frontier Kentucky was chaotic , and Boone 's ventures ultimately failed because his investment strategy was faulty and because his sense of honor made him reluctant to profit at someone else 's expense . According to Faragher , " Boone lacked the ruthless instincts that speculation demanded . "

Frustrated with the legal hassles that went with land speculation , in 1788 , Boone moved upriver to Point Pleasant , Virginia (now West Virginia) . There he operated a trading post and occasionally worked as a surveyor 's assistant . When Virginia created Kanawha County in 1789 , Boone was appointed lieutenant colonel of the county militia . In 1791 , he was elected to the Virginia legislature for the third time . He contracted to provide supplies for the Kanawha militia , but his debts prevented him from buying goods on credit , so he closed his store and returned to hunting and trapping .

In 1795 , Rebecca and he moved back to Kentucky , living in present Nicholas County on land owned by their son Daniel Morgan Boone . The next year , Boone applied to Isaac Shelby , the first governor of the new state of Kentucky , for a contract to widen the Wilderness Road into a wagon route , but the contract was awarded to someone else . Meanwhile , lawsuits over conflicting land claims continued to make their way through the Kentucky courts . Boone 's remaining land claims were sold off to pay legal fees and taxes , but he no longer paid attention to the process . In 1798 , a warrant was issued for Boone 's arrest after he ignored a summons to testify in a court case , although the sheriff never found him . That same year , the Kentucky assembly named Boone County in his honor .

= = Missouri = =

Having endured legal and financial setbacks , Boone sought to make a fresh start by leaving the United States . In 1799 , he moved his extended family to what is now St. Charles County , Missouri , but was then part of Spanish Louisiana . The Spanish , eager to promote settlement in the sparsely populated region , did not enforce the official requirement that all immigrants had to be Roman Catholic . The Spanish governor appointed Boone " syndic " (judge and jury) and commandant (military leader) of the Femme Osage district , The many anecdotes of Boone 's tenure as syndic suggest he sought to render fair judgments rather than to strictly observe the letter of the law .

Boone served as syndic and commandant until 1804 , when Missouri became part of the United States following the Louisiana Purchase . Because Boone 's land grants from the Spanish

government had been largely based on verbal agreements , he once again lost his land claims . In 1809 , he petitioned Congress to restore his Spanish land claims , which was finally done in 1814 . Boone sold most of this land to repay old Kentucky debts . When the War of 1812 came to Missouri , Boone 's sons Daniel Morgan Boone and Nathan Boone took part , but by that time Boone was much too old for militia duty .

Boone spent his final years in Missouri , often in the company of children and grandchildren , where he continued to hunt and trap as much as his health and energy levels permitted . According to one story , in 1810 or later , Boone went with a group on a long hunt as far west as the Yellowstone River , a remarkable journey at his age , if true . In 1816 , a United States officer at Fort Osage , on the Missouri , wrote :

We have been honored by a visit from Colonel Boon , the first settler of Kentucky ; he lately spent two weeks with us He left this for the river Platt , some distance above . Col Boon is eighty @-@ five years of age , five feet seven inches high , stoutly made , and active for one of his years ; is still of vigorous mind , and is pretty well informed . He has taken part in all the wars of America , from before Braddock 's war to the present hour .

Stories were told of Boone making one last visit to Kentucky to pay off his creditors , although some or all of these tales may be folklore . American painter John James Audubon claimed to have gone hunting with Boone in the woods of Kentucky around 1810 . Years later , Audubon painted a portrait of Boone , supposedly from memory , although skeptics have noted the similarity of this painting to the well @-@ known portraits by Chester Harding . Boone 's family insisted he never returned to Kentucky after 1799 , although some historians believe Boone visited his brother Squire near Kentucky in 1810 and have therefore reported Audubon 's story as factual .

= = Death = =

Daniel Boone died of natural causes , other sources , from acute indigestion on September 26 , 1820 , at Nathan Boone 's home on Femme Osage Creek , 2 @-@ 1 / 2 months short of his 86th birthday . His last words were , " I 'm going now . My time has come . " He was buried next to Rebecca , who had died on March 18 , 1813 . The graves , which were unmarked until the mid @-@ 1830s , were near Jemima (Boone) Callaway 's home on Tuque Creek , about two miles (3 km) from the present @-@ day Marthasville , Missouri . In 1845 , the Boones ' remains were supposedly disinterred and reburied in a new cemetery Frankfort Cemetery in Frankfort , Kentucky . Resentment in Missouri about the disinterment grew over the years , and a legend arose that Boone 's remains never left Missouri . According to this story , Boone 's tombstone in Missouri had been inadvertently placed over the wrong grave , but no one had ever corrected the error . Boone 's relatives in Missouri , displeased with the Kentuckians who came to exhume Boone , kept quiet about the mistake , and they allowed the Kentuckians to dig up the wrong remains . No contemporary evidence indicates this actually happened , but in 1983 , a forensic anthropologist examined a crude plaster cast of Boone 's skull made before the Kentucky reburial and announced it might be the skull of an African American . Black slaves had also been buried at Tuque Creek , so it is possible the wrong remains were mistakenly removed from the crowded graveyard . Both the Frankfort Cemetery in Kentucky and the Old Bryan Farm graveyard in Missouri claim to have Boone 's remains .

= = Cultural legacy = =

Many heroic actions and chivalrous adventures are related of me which exist only in the regions of fancy . With me the world has taken great liberties , and yet I have been but a common man .

Daniel Boone remains an iconic figure in American history , although his status as an early American folk hero and later as a subject of fiction have tended to obscure the actual details of his life . Boone is commonly remembered as a hunter , pioneer , and " Indian @-@ fighter " , though most people are uncertain when he lived or exactly what he did . Several places in the United States are named for him , including the Daniel Boone National Forest , the Sheltowee Trace Trail , the town of Boone , North Carolina , various settlements carrying the name of " Boonville " , and seven

counties : Boone County , Illinois , Boone County , Indiana , Boone County , Nebraska , Boone County , West Virginia , Boone County , Missouri , Boone County , Arkansas , and Boone County , Kentucky . Schools across the United States are named for Daniel Boone , including schools in Birdsboro , Pennsylvania , Douglassville , Pennsylvania , Richmond , Kentucky , Wentzville , Missouri , Warrenton , Missouri , Gray , Tennessee , and Chicago .

Boone 's name has long been synonymous with the American outdoors . For example , the Boone and Crockett Club was a conservationist organization founded by Theodore Roosevelt in 1887 , and the Sons of Daniel Boone was the precursor of the Boy Scouts of America .

Daniel Boone was honored with a 6 ¢ stamp in the American Folklore Series on September 26 , 1968 , at Frankfort , Kentucky , where he was buried . He was a famous frontiersman in the development of Virginia , Kentucky and the trans Appalachian west . A wall of roughly hewn boards displays the tools of Boone 's trade : a Pennsylvania rifle , a powder horn , and a knife . The pipe tomahawk represents that the Shawnees had adopted Boone . His name and birth date were carved on the wall .

The U.S. Navy 's James Madison class Polaris submarine USS Daniel Boone (SSBN 629) , was named for Boone . This nuclear submarine was decommissioned in 1994 , and has since been scrapped . She was a member of a class of 41 submarines , all of which were named for great Americans from history , including the USS Lewis and Clark , two other noteworthy frontiersmen of the Great West .

= = = Emergence as a legend = = =

Boone emerged as a legend in large part because of land speculator John Filson 's " The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boon " , part of his book The Discovery , Settlement And present State of Kentucke . First published in 1784 , Filson 's book was a pamphlet primarily intended to popularize Kentucky to immigrants . It was soon translated into French and German , and made Boone famous in America and Europe . Based on interviews with Boone , Filson 's book contained a mostly factual account of Boone 's adventures from the exploration of Kentucky through the American Revolution . However , because the real Boone was a man of few words , Filson invented florid , philosophical dialogue for this " autobiography " . Subsequent editors cut some of these passages and replaced them with more plausible ? but still spurious ? ones . Often reprinted , Filson 's book established Boone as one of the first popular heroes of the United States .

Like John Filson , Timothy Flint also interviewed Boone , and his Biographical Memoir of Daniel Boone , the First Settler of Kentucky (1833) became one of the best selling biographies of the 19th century . Flint greatly embellished Boone 's adventures , doing for Boone what Parson Weems did for George Washington . In Flint 's book , Boone fought hand to paw with a bear , escaped from Indians by swinging on vines (as Tarzan would later do) , and so on . Although Boone 's family thought the book was absurd , Flint greatly influenced the popular conception of Boone , since these tall tales were recycled in countless dime novels and books aimed at young boys .

= = = Symbol and stereotype = = =

Thanks to Filson 's book , in Europe , Boone became a symbol of the " natural man " who lives a virtuous , uncomplicated existence in the wilderness . This was most famously expressed in Lord Byron 's epic poem Don Juan (1822) , which devoted a number of stanzas to Boone , including this one :

Of the great names which in our faces stare ,
The General Boon , back woodsman 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 .

Byron 's poem celebrated Boone as someone who found happiness by turning his back on civilization . In a similar vein , many folk tales depicted Boone as a man who migrated to more remote areas whenever civilization crowded in on him . In a typical anecdote , when asked why he was moving to Missouri , Boone supposedly replied , " I want more elbow room ! " Boone rejected such an interpretation of his life , however . " Nothing embitters my old age , " he said late in life , like " the circulation of absurd stories that I retire as civilization advances ... "

Existing simultaneously with the image of Boone as a refugee from society was , paradoxically , the popular portrayal of him as civilization 's trailblazer . Boone was celebrated as an agent of Manifest Destiny , a pathfinder who tamed the wilderness , paving the way for the extension of American civilization . In 1852 , critic Henry Tuckerman dubbed Boone " the Columbus of the woods " , comparing Boone 's passage through the Cumberland Gap to Christopher Columbus 's voyage to the New World . In popular mythology , Boone became the first to explore and settle Kentucky , opening the way for countless others to follow . In fact , other Americans had explored and settled Kentucky before Boone , as debunkers in the 20th century often pointed out , but Boone came to symbolize them all , making him what historian Michael Lofaro called " the founding father of westward expansion " .

In the 19th century , when Native Americans were being displaced from their lands and confined on reservations , Boone 's image was often reshaped into the stereotype of the belligerent , Indian @-@ hating frontiersman which was then popular . In John A. McClung 's Sketches of Western Adventure (1832) , for example , Boone was portrayed as longing for the " thrilling excitement of savage warfare . " Boone was transformed in the popular imagination into someone who regarded Indians with contempt and had killed scores of the " savages " . The real Boone disliked bloodshed , however . According to historian John Bakeless , there is no record that Boone ever scalped Indians , unlike other frontiersmen of the era . Boone once told his son Nathan that he was certain of having killed only one Indian , during the battle at Blue Licks , although he believed others might have died from his bullets in other battles . Even though Boone had lost two sons in wars with Indians , he respected Indians and was respected by them . In Missouri , Boone often went hunting with the very Shawnees who had captured and adopted him decades earlier . Some 19th @-@ century writers regarded Boone 's sympathy for Indians as a character flaw and therefore altered his words to conform to contemporary attitudes .

= = = In fiction = = =

Boone 's adventures , real and mythical , formed the basis of the archetypal hero of the American West , popular in 19th @-@ century novels and 20th @-@ century films . The main character of James Fenimore Cooper 's Leatherstocking Tales , the first of which was published in 1823 , bore striking similarities to Boone ; even his name , Nathaniel Bumppo , echoed Daniel Boone 's name . As mentioned above , The Last of the Mohicans (1826) , Cooper 's second Leatherstocking novel , featured a fictionalized version of Boone 's rescue of his daughter . After Cooper , other writers developed the Western hero , an iconic figure which began as a variation of Daniel Boone .

In the 20th century , Boone was featured in numerous comic strips , radio programs , and films , where the emphasis was usually on action and melodrama rather than historical accuracy . These are little remembered today ; probably the most noteworthy is the 1936 film Daniel Boone , with George O 'Brien playing the title role . Horn in the West , an outdoor drama performed annually in Boone , North Carolina since 1952 , is a fictional account of the lives of settlers whom Daniel Boone had led into the Appalachian Mountains .

Daniel Boone was the subject of a TV series that ran on NBC from 1964 to 1970 . In the popular theme song for the series , Boone was described as a " big man " in a " coonskin cap " , and the " rippin 'est , roarin 'est , fightin 'est man the frontier ever knew ! " This did not describe the real Daniel Boone , who was not a big man and did not wear a coonskin cap . Boone was portrayed this way because Fess Parker , the tall actor who played Boone , was essentially reprising his role as Davy Crockett from an earlier TV series . That Boone could be portrayed the same way as Crockett , another American frontiersman with a very different persona , was another example of how Boone 's

image could be reshaped to suit popular tastes .