

Daniel Boone

<http://www.berksweb.com/boonetext.html>



The name Daniel Boone will forever be synonymous with the saga of the American frontier. Born and raised in Pennsylvania, Boone was the inveterate wayfarer who achieved lasting fame guiding land-hungry settlers to the Kentucky frontier and fighting to defend them against Indian attack.

Boone was born November 2, 1734 (some sources say October 22 - more info here and here), in the log farmhouse that evolved into - and was replaced by - the main house of the Daniel Boone Homestead, situated east of Reading in Berks County.

Daniel's father, Squire Boone, was an English Quaker born in Devonshire in 1696. While still a youth, Squire, his brother George and sister Sarah embarked for Philadelphia to appraise the possibilities of settlement for their father's family, who immigrated finally in 1717.

Squire settled first in Abington, then moved to Gwynedd, where he met Sarah Morgan, born in 1700 to Welsh Quakers. Married in 1720, they lived first near Gwynedd, then in Chalfont, Bucks County, before purchasing 250 acres of the Homestead in 1730. Squire's father and brothers also lived in the area and became prominent in business, local government and the Friends Meeting.

Daniel was the sixth child, one of eleven, born to Squire and Sarah. Although little is known of Daniel's Pennsylvania years, he undoubtedly helped his father as farmer, weaver and blacksmith and had the usual experiences of a boy growing up in the back country.

In 1750 Squire and Sarah joined the growing southward movement of Pennsylvanians, and concluded their long trek in the Yadkin Valley of North Carolina. While their principal motive may have been economic, it is also a fact that Squire had been "read out of Meeting" by the Exeter Friends in 1748 for his unrepentance in allowing his son Israel to marry a non-Quaker.

Daniel was then only 15 1/2 years old, but ahead was a life filled with the rigors of the American frontier. In 1756 he married Rebecca Bryan and with her - when he was home - raised ten children. In 1773 he failed in his first attempt to settle Kentucky, but in 1775 he succeeded in establishing Boonesborough. Between 1775 and 1783 Daniel Boone was a leader among settlers in opening new parts of Kentucky and in resisting Indian raids. Although Boone lost two sons and a brother in the fighting, he was merciful and compassionate toward his native adversaries.

Twice, Boone returned to visit his boyhood home - in 1781 and in 1788 - a hero and legend in his day. Though his legend grew, his finances languished. Beset by creditors and personal disillusion, Boone finally left Kentucky in 1799 for Missouri, where he died near St. Louis on September 26, 1820.

In Pennsylvania, Daniel's boyhood home changed to reflect the growth, prosperity and cultural diversity of eastern Berks County. William Maugridge purchased the property from Squire in 1750. An Englishman who was related to the Boones (though not himself a Quaker), he served Berks County as a judge from its establishment in 1752 until his death in 1766. In 1770 John DeTurk, a Pennsylvania German, purchased the property and prospered there until he died in 1808.

Since 1938 the Daniel Boone Homestead has been a state-owned historic site, administered by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. It includes 579 acres of land, seven eighteenth-century structures, a lake, picnic areas and other recreational facilities. The site interprets the lives of the Boone, Maugridge and DeTurk families through exhibits, programs, tours and publications. The site also serves as a wildlife refuge, where visitors may enjoy numerous species of animals and birds.

Daniel Boone

American Pioneer and Trailblazer

<http://www.lucidcafe.com/library/95nov/boone.html>

1734 - 1820

I have never been lost, but I will admit
to being confused for several weeks.

—Daniel Boone



Daniel Boone was born November 2, 1734 in a log cabin in Berks County, near present-day Reading, Pennsylvania. Boone is one of the most famous pioneers in United States history. He spent most of his life exploring and settling the American frontier.

Boone had little formal education, but he did learn the skills of a woodsmen early in life. By age 12 his sharp hunter's eye and skill with a rifle helped keep his family well provided with wild game. In 1756 Boone married Rebecca Bryan, a pioneer woman with great courage and patience. He spent most of the next ten years hunting and farming to feed his family. In 1769 a trader and old friend, John Findley, visited Boone's cabin. Findley was looking for an overland route to Kentucky and needed a skilled woodsman to guide him. In 1769 Boone, Findley and five men traveled along wilderness trails and through the Cumberland gap in the Appalachian

mountains into Kentucky. They found a "hunter's paradise" filled with buffalo, deer, wild turkey and meadows ideal for farming. Boone vowed to return with his family one day.

In 1775 Boone and 30 other woodsmen were hired to improve the trails between the Carolinas and the west. The resulting route reached into the heart of Kentucky and became known as the "Wilderness Road." That same year Boone built a fort and village called Boonesborough in Kentucky, and moved his family over the Wilderness Trail to their new home.

Boone had numerous encounters with the native people of Kentucky during the Revolutionary War. In 1776, Shawnee warriors kidnapped his daughter and two other girls. Two days later Boone caught up with the Indians and through surprise attack rescued the girls. In 1778, he was captured by another band of Shawnee. Boone learned that the tribe was planning an attack on Boonesborough. He negotiated a settlement with Chief Blackfish of the Shawnee, preventing the attack. The Indians admired their captive for his skill as a hunter and woodsman and adopted him into their tribe as a son of Blackfish. He escaped when he learned the Shawnee, at the instigation of the British, were planning another attack on Boonesborough. The settlement was reinforced and provisioned in preparation for the assault. When British soldiers and the Indians attacked, Boonesborough withstood a ten-day siege and Chief Blackfish and the British finally withdrew.

After the Revolutionary War, Boone worked as a surveyor along the Ohio River and settled for a time in Kanawha County, Virginia (now West Virginia). In 1792, Kentucky was admitted into the Union as the 15th state. Litigation arose that questioned many settlers' title to their lands. Boone lost all his property due to lack of clear title. In 1799, he followed his son, Daniel Morgan Boone, to Missouri which was then under the dominion of Spain. Traveling by canoe, he and his family paddled down the Ohio River to St. Louis.

In 1800, Boone was appointed magistrate of the Femme Osage District in St. Charles County, Missouri. He received a large tract of land for his services. When Missouri was transferred to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase, Boone once again lost all his land, most of which was sold to satisfy creditors in Kentucky. Boone's wife Rebecca died on March 18, 1813. He spent his remaining years living in his son Nathan's home in the St. Charles area. He went on his final hunting trip at the age of 83.

Daniel Boone died on September 26, 1820 at the age of 85. In 1845 the remains of Boone and his wife were moved to Kentucky to rest in the great pioneer's "hunter's paradise."