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Recollections on Daniel Boone's First Journey to Kentucky, 1769

by Nathan Boone

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cleaning all she wanted - & having 1769
then, left, sent word to a poor
woman to go & get the remainder.
Mr. Boone went home, while Daniel
from weariness lay down on a dry
flat rock upon his back, placing
his hat over his face, with a
view to take a nap. After a
while the woman's two daughters
came for the fish, & seeing a pail
of entrails from the fish Mr. Boone
had cleaned, took up the pail
& emptied the whole in Daniel's
face: He thought if they were fond
of such rough joking - he wd pay them
back in a rough way, & gave them
a good beating, sending them off
with bloody noses. Their mother went
to Mr. Boone with ^{a sorry} complaint, who
said if she had not brought up ^{good manners} ~~they~~ ^{her}
daughters to better behavior, it was
high time they were taught - & she thought
they had got no more than they deserved.

1769 - Kentucky Exploration*. When Tim-
othy came to N.C. in 1768. or '69, met Col.
D. Boone - The latter related how he
*See N. & N. in, vol. 73, p. 173.

=ben, that Col. D. Boone used to speak 1762.
of being three times captured - though
once could scarcely be called a captivity -
yet Col. N. & M. Boone cannot call to
memory how or when it occurred. They
also remember that Alex. Norley was the
name of the man who came out with
Lynce Boone - but which time, not remembered.
Col. Boone coincides with me in this view,
as best reconciling his own recollection
with the narrative of his father & Dan
Bryan's statement: That D. Boone & Stewart
were out in Dec^r reconnoitering or hunting,
when ^{several} ~~the~~ Indians (as D. Bryan says) rushed out &
took them - not as prisoners of war, but to ^{make}
show ~~them~~ their camp & going to the first
camp (which they were willing to sacrifice, with
the hope of saving the rest) they probably
found one of the party there taking care
of it, & Boone & Stewart (as may be inferred
from D. Bryan's statement) gave him orders
to leave slyly & give notice to the other
camps ~~to leave~~ ^{horses,} ~~the~~ ^{nothing valuable} ~~the~~ ^{hid} - but
when Boone & Stewart reached them suc-
=cessively, to their mortification & disap-
=pointment found nothing removed,
& all fell into the hands of the Indians.

1769. except the guns & some ammunition for the party - (for it is certain, as Col. M.B. Remond = Hess, that Col. D. Boone & Stewart had theirs - i.e., Doubtless the Finley & the others also) - there too, when the Indians left, they must have given the parting warning about the wasps & yellow-jackets stinging them, if they ever should return to Kentucky again, as Ed. Bryan says (tho' misplaces it, as having occurred when Boone & Stewart got the Indian horses & were retaken) - & parted in a friendly manner. (Thus parting, it wd be natural, that the Indians sh^d permit Boone & his party to retain their guns & a supply of ammunition sufficient to kill game on their return home - & wd tell them to go there, & not return ~~return~~ again to Ky to kill the Indians, beavers & other games.)

Now plundered, & unsupplied for a winter's hunt, very likely Boone thought best to make an effort to recover some of the horses from the Indians & thus be the better able either to return home altogether, or else for some one of the party to go & get a supply of

ammunition & other necessaries; & 1769
probably with some such views, after
the Indians were thought to have
got beyond any apprehensions of
pursuit, Boone & Stewart started
the others to await the result of this
enterprise. After two days they over-
took the Indians, encamped - found their
horses out, & some of them belled (which
Col. Boone says, has a tendency to keep
them together & he often bells one or more
in his field for that purpose) & got
some 4 or 5 horses (some of them belled)
- & Dr. Bryan says Genl. Boone got his, but
Stewart did not find his - others of
Boone's companions must have also
have had horses, as Col. N. Boone
& I think) - & made off on their
return: The remainder of that night,
all the following day & night they kept
up their flight, & stopping a few minutes
next morning about sunrise on the sunny
side of a hill or stopping ground, Boone
reclining on the ground, ^{to warm himself by the morning rays of the sun} Stewart in
the act of tying his moccasin, when
Boone with his ear on the ground thought
he heard something like a roaring

1769. noise, & raising his head & looking behind ^{by glancing at the Indians} ~~by glancing at the Indians~~ ^{rising from the Indians' camp} ~~rising from the Indians' camp~~ saw first descending the brow of the hill towards them, the Indian party, or nearly the whole, galloping on horseback, — & too near to allow Boone & Stewart to attempt escape. The Indians, came up with cheerful countenances, no signs of anger, but whooping & laughing, as though they were making sport of Boone & Stewart as not being sufficiently smart to evade them. Taking one of the bells from the horses, they fastened it around Boone's neck, & made him run around & jingle it, saying in broken English derisively, "steal horse, ha?" It is not remembered by W. H. Boone, that Boone & Stewart were closely confined by day — at liberty, but closely watched; but at night were confined between ~~the~~ Indians & perhaps fastened, or a cord or tug stretched over the prisoners & the Indians on each side of them, as all were lying at rest, so the latter ^{had} ~~had~~ no movement

that might be made by their prisoners. 1769.
 The Indians had for their leader (or at least one of their prominent members) Capt. Will, as Mrs. Col. N. Boone well recollect, - (who I suppose was doubtless the Shawanoe who lived at Spave near Willstown, on Miami - L.C.D.) - & steering their course for the Ohio, beyond which they lived, were, as Col. N. Boone, believes, Shawanoes; [Dr. Bays says they were Shawanoe, & going in that direction is another evidence of it - & Capt. Will being a Shawanoe name, & afterwards in Feb. 1778, Will being with the Indians, who were Shawanoes, who took Boone & the Tall boilers, makes it conclusive in my mind - L.C.D.]. The Indians kept constantly promising Boone & Stewart that they would liberate them next day - so it went on day after day, until 7 days had elapsed, & the party was within a day's travel of the Ohio river - over which Dr. Boone resolved he would not pass. The Indians probably only intended to keep them in suspense till they should cross the Ohio, & then they probably thought their horses would be beyond the reach of

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it or head the fugitives, should they attempt to emerge from it: It being now quite dark in the cave, the Indians did not attempt to follow or search for them there. When the confusion was over, & Boone & Stewart ventured carefully to make their way through the cave, soon got beyond the reach of the Indians. [The particulars of Boone & Stewart going to recover their horses - getting them - being retaken - & their final escape, both Col. N. Boone & I, distinctly & clearly remember as having heard Col. Daniel Boone often narrate.]

Returning to the Station camp, they found all gone: [Col. N. Boone & I can remember no particulars here - & presume, as I do, that Dr. Bryan is correct, that Boone & Stewart took their trail & overtook them on Rock Castle, 35 or 40 miles, & to Daniel Boone's great joy there found his brother Squire, who had come out with probably Nirley - & had as Col. N. & Mrs. Boone think accidentally found the Station camp - & learning that Dr. Boone & Stewart had

1769. Some to recover their horses, & had long overstaid their time [two days in overtaking the Indians - one in retreat with the horses - then 7 days captivity & travelling towards the Ohio, would make ten days, I were probably ^{fully a day or night} ~~more~~ more in returning to Station Camp) concluded they were either killed or taken - & all started for the settlement. That Dr. Boone & Stewart now overtaking them, Squire Boone & Nearly (who had, as Dr. Bryan says brought out new supplies, probably horse, as well as traps & ammunition) agreed to return, as they ^{now} had means to prosecute the winter's hunt - but the others ^{as there is historical interest} ~~rather~~ disheartened (as Filson says, ^{as} the facts would seem to show) returned home.

Of Hinley nothing further is known by either Col. H. Boone or Cooley - & nothing whatever, except the fact both men were out in '69 with Dr. Boone - of Holden & Cooley (Cooley, is the pronunciation they always heard Col. Dr. Boone give it): That Col. Dr. Boone used to say that Mooney was, in 1774, (may be in Shelby's company) a spy on the

campaign & battle of Point Pleasant 1769.
 & was killed in the battle - & Col. N. Boone
 thinks from the fact that he was a spy,
 that he was one of the advance, proba-
 bly the spy killed just before the com-
 mencement of the battle.

Daniel Boone says in his Narrative, that
 one man came out with Squire Boone
 in the first instance, & subsequently
 returned home by himself: Daniel
Bryan says the same, but don't recollect
 who he was, nor seemingly much,
 if anything about it; but mentions
 that when Squire Boone came out
 the 2^d time (1st of May, 1770, as Bryan says -
 but July '70, according to Daniel Boone) that
Alex. Neely & Jesse Boone came with him.
Col. N. Boone hardly recollect the name of Neely,
 but have no recollection whatever
 about Jesse Boone coming out -
 that Jesse's father, Israel, brother of Col.
Daniel, had early died of consumption,
 of which his wife had previously died &
 as no other Boones were had it, it was
 thought he caught it of his wife - Squire
Jesse was mainly raised by Daniel Boone
 & wife - was always unlucky, first breaking his
 * See Printed Scrap, Boiling the Bones - p. 62.

1770. Let them be as: Hence Col. N. Boone think, agreeing with me, that Lease Boone probably never came out during the Ky Exploration* & that Verley was the one who came out with Squire Boone & returned home by himself. [Next year went out with the Long Hunters, etc. [C.D.]]

* I am
satisfied
from
Boone's
own
words
in 1776
that
Lease
Boone
did not
go out
with
Squire
Boone
in Dec. '69.

Daniel Bryan says, that the man [Verley] who came out with Squire Boone in Dec^r. 1769, soon after returned, & finally that Squire B. started back after supplies, to rejoin his brother & Stuart the 1st of May ensuing. While Col. D. Boone in his Narrative says that Squire Boone did not start back for supplies (which he brought a sufficiency in Dec. '69) till 1st May, '70. & returned July 27th following, according to agreement. This version of Col. D. Boone's I am at present most inclined to adopt, & as best reconciling all the statements, & so thinks Col. N. Boone.

When Col. N. Boone wrote out his note, (see p. 8th of this volume) sometime since, - early in 1851, - not then knowing of Squire Boone's arrival with supplies just

after the robbery of the camp, was, 1770.
of the opinion & belief that Stewart
had gone to North Carolina for sup-
plies, was to return at a specified
time & meet at their camp - & on this
mission, was killed: But Nash Boone,
distinctly remembers, that Col.
Dan. Boone & Stewart had only
separated to hunt or trap for
some designated period, & then to
meet at camp: Col. N. Boone is now
fully persuaded of this view & un-
derstanding of the matter: With
this explanation, they both fully &
clearly remember after hearing Col.
Daniel Boone relate as follows:

That their camp was on ^{or near} the northern
bank of Kentucky river - not the old
Station Camp ^{but lower down the river} - not far from the mouth
of Red River, - that Stewart went to
the south of Kentucky & Boone
to the north, or at least the signal w.
seem to indicate it: That after their
separation, it proved a very wet time,
in mid winter, & the Kentucky became
very much swollen, & at the region of
their camp, had gently overflowed

1770. its banks. Daniel Boone reached the camp at the appointed time, & Stewart not coming he attributed it to the swollen state of the river. After a few days when the waters fell, Boone crossed, & nearly opposite the camp & on the nearest high land to the backing waters, found the remains of a ^{raft} fire which had apparently been used a couple of days, & the initials of Stewart's name freshly cut in the bark of a tree near by. No other clue or evidence could be found of him. Until Stewart's remains were found in 1775, many surmised that he had taken that occasion to run off, & return no more to his friends or family — but Col. Dr. Boone & wife both used to say, that he was a man of ^{feelings} & devoted to his family, never had any difficulty with his wife; & Col. Dr. Boone said he never had a brother he thought more of than he did of John Stewart — that he had all the confidence in him

that one man could ^{repose} ~~be~~, in another, 1770.
that he was faithful in the
performance of his promise, a most
essential requisite, as Col. Boone al-
ways said, in a hunting companion,
that they might feel a strong assen-
-sance that some unusual misfortune
only could cause a failure on the
part of either to meet at camp
at any given time. Boone, therefore,
always thought that Stewart either
got killed, or sickened & died in the wil-
-derness.

This mystery was not ^{dispelled} unravelled till
the Spring of 1775, when Col. Boone was with
a party marking the road from Powell's
Valley to Kentucky river at the Bigick,
where Booneboro was afterwards
located - & probably not far from
the latter end of the route, after
taking up camp one day towards eve-
-ning, one of the party discovered near
by the bones of a man in a hollow tree,
~~namely~~. Boone went with others to
examine them, & in taking out the
bones they found a powder horn,
which Boone, knew to be ~~the same~~

Col. Boone - Early Ky Exploration.

1770.

belonged to his long lost friend, even had the name of John Stewart not been ^{found} plainly engraven upon it, a piece of fate almost universal with the early borderers. Col. Boone also said, that he could, he was quite certain, recognize in the skull the well known outlines of Stewart's features. Upon a careful examination of the bones, one of the arms was found to have been broken, & the dislocation of the leaden ball still distinctly discernable; no other evidence of injury - no cleaving of the skull by ^{or marks of the use of any} the tomahawk ^{scalping knife}. Nothing of Stewart's rifle could be found. Col. Boone concluded that Stewart when camped on the southern bank of Ky river, had for amusement cut the initials of his name on the tree, & subsequently been fired on & wounded by the Indians, & fled, perhaps leaving his rifle behind or dropping it from his disabled arm - or becoming weak in his flight from his enemies, have cast it away: or perhaps have left the camp, apprehending a still further rise in the river, but the

initials on the tree, & searched out 1770.
a more suitable camping spot, where
he was attacked by the Indians. That
when wounded, & beyond the im-
-mediate reach of his pursuers, & not
knowing how soon they might overtake
him, & knowing the great flood in
the river & the uncertainty how long
it might, before ~~at~~ he & Boone
could meet. & moreover, perhaps,
judging from his own misfortune, fearing
lest Boone might already have
fallen by the Indians, & perhaps,
~~withal~~, the bullet that broke
his arm, or some other, may have
penetrated his body & given wounds
yet more dangerous than his broken
arm, concluded his only course of
safety was, to wend his way as best
he could, subsisting upon roots & herbs,
to the nearest settlement - & thus,
had travelled, in want & suffering,
a day or two, & perhaps more; till his
-nearly sinking nature could no longer
bear up, crept into the hollow tree
where his remains were, over five
years afterwards, found, & there put

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Col. Boone - Early Ky Exploration.

1770. - by sheltered from the winty storm, died alone & uncomfortable, the faithful companion of Boone. (See Boone's & Boone's abt 1st Dec. 1770.)

Stewart's loss was sincerely mourned by Boone, whose youngest sister Hannah he had married, & according to Dr. Bryan, left 4 children; & his widow often (as Col. H. & Mrs. Boone say) preached in public the gospel faith - subsequently married a Pennington & settled in the Green River country. Nothing is known by Col. or Mrs. Boone of her descendants, by either Stewart or Pennington, - are probably in the Green River country.*

As Boone & Stewart had been captured by the Indians, Dec. 22^d 1769, went & showed, as guides, their camps to the Indians - pursued them & retook their horses, & were again taken & kept 7 days - then returned from within a day's march of the Ohio, to their old Station Camp - making about 13 or 14 days - this would make some time about 4th Jan. 1770,

When they reached their Station Camp, 1770
from which the others must have
departed the day before, as Boone
Stewart overtook them 35 or 40
miles off at Rockcastle. The Boones
Stewart, & Nelly returning? it must
have been pretty well along in
January or early February when
Stewart was killed.

Where Squire Boone was when
Daniel Boone & Stewart parted,
does not ^{or, however} appear - probably had
gone in some other direction trapping,
may not have appointed so early a
day for meeting as the others had
^{if they may have taken the same route, and if Stewart took}
^{it, they must have been lost before they could have met.}
~~done so. It is plain from the above narrative that it was after Stewart's death that Nelly~~
~~returned to Boone in the fall - I then he & Nelly made them a shelter, & kept together~~
~~and did not separate until they were separated & lost.~~

When Squire Boone started for home
with the furs ~~shot~~ of the winter's hunt
(see p. 10) which must have been entirely home,
^{about half a dozen deer skins}
^{some probably of the best quality}
~~for packing~~ - of which he was robbed
by the way, as Moses & Naiah Boone say, &
D. Boone in his "Memorial", & the note of Isaac
Shelby - but of which Col. H. Boone has no
detailed recollection, only remembers hearing
his father speak something of this robbery.
It may have been that Squire Boone was

1770. robbed on his subsequent return in the fall of 1770, when the streams would be swollen as represented - Hence this robbery detained him longer than he otherwise would have been in getting supplies on credit, as he must have done - & rejoining his brother after the specified period: This seems the most probable.

When Spive left in May '70, they had during the winter & spring been so industrious in hunting, that the supply of ammunition brought out in December, was now nearly exhausted - so much so (as Col. N. Boone remembers) that Daniel Boone was compelled to surrender what he had for killing game for his own use, & thus forego the pleasure a summer's deer hunt would have afforded him.

After the Indian robbery, & the departure of Kinley, Holden, Cooley & Mooney, Boone & his remaining companions did not occupy the old Station Camp, but made new camps as new hunting localities required, seldom

1770.

staid two nights in a place after
Stewart's misfortune. When Lyine
Boone left, Daniel determined
that he would spend the inter-
vening time in exploring the country -
a great deal of which he rambled
over. He discovered several of the
noted salt licks & springs, which
in every case were easily found
by following the well-beaten buffalo
roads leading to them. He then visi-
-ted the Upper & Lower Blue Licks,
- at the latter of which particularly, he saw thousands of buffaloes
- & kept on down picking a few miles
below the latter to where the old In-
-dian war-path crossed - then struck
across to the Ohio, which he touched
some 20 or 30 miles above the
mouth of Pickens - followed down it
along the southern shore to the
Falls of Ohio - visiting Big Bone Lick -
& seeing Indians, in two or three
instances, ^{at some distance from him} on the northern shore of
the Ohio, whom he avoided without
being discovered: Near the foot of the
Falls of Ohio, on the Kentucky shore, he
found the remains ^{what was evidently} of a ~~trading~~ ^{trading} house - part

1770. of a chimney, some 3 or 4 feet high of stone, & some of the picketing, of split logs inserted endwise in the ground, still remaining, — and apparently occupied some twelve or fifteen years before.

Now striking across the country for his old hunting region, he struck & passed Ky river — probably near the present Frankfort; & there saw an Indian fishing, sitting upon a fallen tree projecting over the water, & Col. Boone used afterwards ^{simply} to say, that "while ~~he~~ was looking at him, he tumbled into the river & I saw no more of him."* It was understood from the way in which he spoke of it, that he shot & killed the Indian; yet he seemed not to care about alluding more particularly to it. The Indians had robbed him & companions of all their peltry, furs, horses & other valuables, had twice captured him & Stewart, & finally had killed Stewart; & no

like
himself
found
later
at Bent's
Star

1770.

doubt he thought this fellow one of a party near by, for whom he was fishing, & might discover ~~Boone~~^{him} & endanger his life; & thus Boone, on the whole deemed it most prudent to have him out of the way. This act may have been the means of preserving his own life for great future usefulness to his family and country.*

At length according to appointment (as Dr. Boone says in his narrative) Squire Boone returned July 27th to their old camp: Dan? Bryan mentions, that Squire Boone returned again to N.C. for supplies, traps &c. for their coming winter hunt: & Col. Boone used to relate the following, as recollected more particularly by Mrs. Col. N. Boone, & also remembered in a general way by Col. N. Boone also; & it can only be properly introduced by supposing that Squire Boone did make such a second return trip in the fall, — what has already been said on pages 62 & 63, goes in some measure to corroborate

1770. the idea of Squire Boone, returning in the fall & getting robbed, & the Indians getting drowned by high autumnal waters — & this robbery delaying him in his return. That Squire staying beyond the allotted period, Daniel became uneasy, & started to meet his brother, & failed to do so, would have gone on home, rather than remain alone during the winter, & at the same time uncertain as to his brother's fate. On the way he found an aged Indian in a rude camp, who had seemingly been abandoned & left to die, as too old to be of further service to himself & others. Boone was touched with his helpless & pitiable situation, went back half a mile where he had killed a deer & only taken from it a small quantity for his own use, & carried the remainder to the old Indian, who received it gratefully as signs would evince — & left him to his fate. — Passing on, at length he discovered a large dry tree on fire, & stopping it, found

his brother there to their mutual 1770
 joy - who had stopped & kindled
 the fire by which to warm him-
 =self, for it was, then early win-
 =ter, probably December, & some
 snow on the ground.

They soon after went to the
 Green River country - & there (as
 Col. W. Boone & lady distinctly remem-
 =ber hearing Col. D. Boone often
 say,) they met the Long Hunters;
 and as D. Boone returned to their
 camp one evening, he was, told
~~that~~ ^{by} two of the men, ^{who} had that
 day ^{remained} alone at camp, ^{that they} got into
 a dispute that, as he ~~could~~ had
 good evidence of, badly bruised up
 each other's faces - ~~of Boone was asked~~
^{them what in the world two companions, alone in the woods,}
~~to guess what he thought they could~~
 possibly find to quarrel about? in
 the woods. ~~He could not imagine it~~
~~all~~ ^{they} laughed heartily when ^{they} told him
 that their bloody fist-cuff fight
 had its origin in a dispute re-
 =pecting the natural history of
 the wood-tick, a pestilent little
 insect common in the Western wilderness.