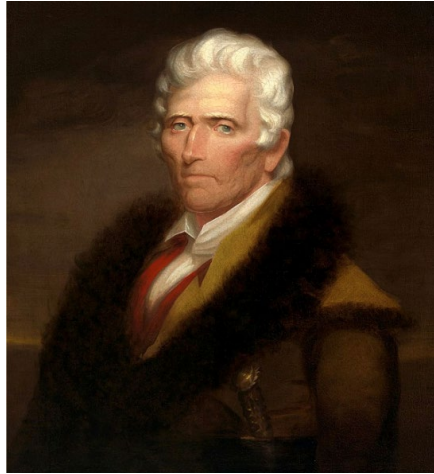


DANIEL BOONE

Lieutenant Colonel, Revolutionary War

5th Great Grandfather of Compatriot Larry Joe Reynolds



No name looms larger in the story of the early American West than Daniel Boone. A wanderer for most of his life, he is forever associated with the exploration of Kentucky. Boone's exploits in exploring and hunting in the Bluegrass, as well as its defense during the American Revolution made him a legend in his own time.

Born on November 2, 1734, Daniel Boone grew up in Oley Township northwest of Philadelphia. As a young man, he spent many hours alone in the forest where he developed and refined the skills that one day would make him famous. At the age of fifteen, he left Pennsylvania with his family following a break with the Society of Friends (better known as the Quakers). Boone resided for about a year in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley before he finally settled along the Yadkin River in North Carolina.

Rather than take up a life of farming, Boone preferred to make his living as a marker or long hunter. Ranging far from home for months and sometimes years at a time, these individuals relied on the money from the sale of deerskins collected on their hunts to support themselves and their families.

In the spring of 1755, Boone returned to Pennsylvania as a wagoner on Maj. Gen. Edward Braddock's expedition to Fort Duquesne. During the march, he met a trader named John Findley who regaled him with tales of a veritable Eden west of the Allegheny Mountains, Kentucky. This relatively untouched land was populated by deer, buffalo, elk and other game which presented a significant financial opportunity. Fortunately, both men survived the ensuing ambush and defeat of Braddock's command.

After a brief courtship, Boone married Rebecca Bryan on August 14, 1756. Their marriage spanned more than half a century and produced ten children, despite Boone's long absences. In the ensuing years Boone's hunting took him throughout the Carolinas and south to Florida.

Sometime in early 1769, John Findley appeared at the Boone cabin. His visit rekindled Daniel's interest in exploring Kentucky. Along with Findley and several others, Boone set out to find his promised land. Boone's party traveled from the Upper Yadkin Valley to part of what became Tennessee, Virginia and through the Cumberland Gap. On June 7, Boone climbed an eminence later known as Pilot Knob and caught his first sight of

Kentucky. He spent the next two years hunting and exploring the wilderness, going as far as the Falls of the Ohio River. He did not return home until May 1771.

In the summer of 1773, Boone led settlers west to permanently settle Kentucky. While traveling through Powell's Valley in southwestern Virginia, a small group traveling behind the main party were ambushed by Delaware, Shawnee and Cherokee warriors. Among those killed were Boone's oldest son, James. The tragedy prompted Boone to abandon the effort.

Another opportunity, however, came in March 1775. Judge Richard Henderson, along with other business associates had formed the Transylvania Company. Their goal was to buy Kentucky from the Cherokees. Henderson enlisted Boone's help to assemble tribal leaders at Sycamore Shoals on the Watauga River. The negotiations resulted in the Cherokees signing over their claims to Henderson, who directed Boone to cut a road through the mountains to allow for the passage of settlers. Heading a band of axmen, Boone cleared a path that would later become part of the Wilderness Road. Boone's party stopped near a salt lick along the Kentucky River on April 6. There, he established a small fort to which he gave his name, Boonesborough.

Thirteen days later in far away Massachusetts, Minutemen clashed with British infantry at Lexington and Concord. The battles ignited the American Revolution, which soon spread westward as the Crown hoped to maintain control over the Ohio River Valley. With many of its troops committed to the colonies, the British had to rely on the assistance of allied Indian tribes to engage American settlers.

On July 14, 1776, Boone's daughter Jemima, along with Fanny and Betsy Callaway were abducted by a group of Indians while canoeing along the Kentucky River. Boone, along with several others, immediately set out in pursuit. Picking up the kidnappers' trail, Boone and his men overtook the party and successfully rescued the girls. This episode would eventually be immortalized by author James Fenimore Cooper in *The Last of the Mohicans*.

As 1777 opened, the British stepped up their raids in Kentucky. Their operations were directed at the destruction of crops and livestock in order to force the abandonment of the settlements. Boone himself was shot in the ankle during an April raid on Boonesborough. Although the bullet was extracted, he was disabled for several weeks.

The following February, Boone led a contingent to boil salt at the Blue Licks along the Licking River. While out hunting, he was overtaken and captured by a large party of Shawnees. Led by the war chief Black Fish, they were headed to attack Boonesborough. Boone reverted to diplomacy and was able managed to arrange the surrender of the men in order to delay the assault. The ploy worked and the Shawnees took Boone and the salt boilers north to their towns above the Ohio River. Many were adopted by the Shawnees, including Boone who became Black Fish's son. Boone managed to escape in the middle of June and made his way back to Boonesborough.

Black Fish, at the head of 400 warriors surrounded Boonesborough on the morning of September 7, 1778. Boone had only 60 men to face the onslaught. After negotiations broke down, the siege commenced. Both sides exchanged fire at long range and the Shawnees even attempted to tunnel into the fort. The engagement lasted for nine days and miraculously, the Americans were able to hold on. Unable to capture the fort, Black Fish retired to the Ohio River.

For the next three years, Boone hunted and served as a representative in the Virginia Legislature. Despite the surrender of Lord Charles Cornwallis' army at Yorktown in October 1781, raids by Shawnees and Great Lakes tribes continued. In the middle of August 1782 Boone headed a party to relieve Bryan's Station which had been attacked by a combined Loyalist and Indian force under British Capt. William Caldwell. At the head of about 180 militia, including Boone, Col. John Todd set off in pursuit of Caldwell. Early on the morning of August 19, Todd

attacked Caldwell on a ridge overlooking the Licking River at the Blue Licks. In a battle of just fifteen minutes, Caldwell managed to set the Kentuckians to flight and inflicted over 50% casualties. Among them was Boone's son, Israel.

In the summer of 1783, Boone was interviewed by John Filson, an itinerant schoolteacher from Pennsylvania. Embellished by Filson, he turned his notes into *The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boone*, which appeared as an appendix in *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke*. Distributed across the country and in Europe, its publication was extremely popular and brought international attention to Boone's life.

Despite this newfound fame, Boone struggled to make a living. Now over fifty, he attempted to provide for his family as a surveyor, merchant and tavern keeper. Unable to make ends meet and with creditors closing in, Boone decided to leave Kentucky for good in 1799 and move to the Spanish Territory of Missouri.

The Spanish were pleased to have someone of Boone's stature in Missouri. Authorities gave him a land grant and made him a syndic. Although his eyesight steadily deteriorated, Boone still enjoyed the hunt, venturing still farther west and north up the Missouri River. What land he acquired was sold to pay off his debts in Kentucky. On March 18, 1813, Rebecca tragically passed away.

As he grew older, he was visited by travelers and passersby who just wanted to say they had met and spoken with the pioneer. When asked about his life by one individual, Boone replied "Many heroic actions and chivalrous adventures are related of me which only exist in the regions of fancy. With me the world has taken great liberties, and yet I have been but a common man." Boone died on September 26, 1820. He is buried with Rebecca in Frankfort, Kentucky.

Where Is Daniel Boone Buried?

life filled with daring escapes, harrowing battles, and rugged journeys through the unbroken wilderness, the explorer and frontiersman Daniel Boone died peacefully in his sleep at age 86. On September 26, 1820, surrounded by his family, he died in the home of his son Nathan near what is now Defiance, Missouri, according to History and the 1902 biography "Daniel Boone." By the time of his death, he'd become a legend, and his past, that included stealing land from Native Americans, making poor business decisions, and being sued by the residents of the town he founded in Kentucky, had given way to mythologizing.

Upon learning of his death, the Pennsylvania Republican newspaper described him as "one of the most enterprising and intrepid men this country ever produced" who "delighted in perils and battle." After Boone died, his remains, like the unsettled and meandering path Boone took through life, made a similar journey that included two different graves and rumors that his imposing monument may actually contain the wrong body.

Daniel Boone Paved The Way For Westward Expansion

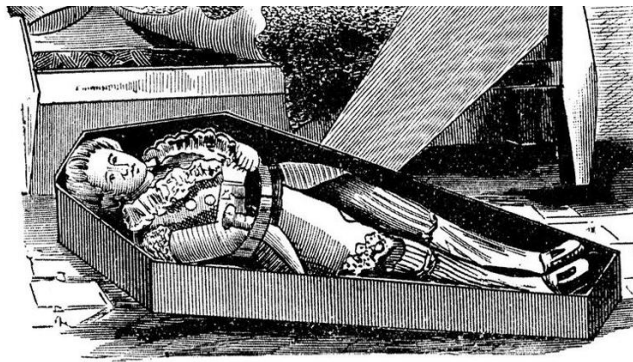


Sign for Daniel Boone's trail © Joshua Sturgill / Shutterstock

Daniel Boone was born November 2, 1734, to Quaker parents near Reading, Pennsylvania, per Biography. His mother taught him to read and write while his father schooled him in wilderness survival. Daniel became an exceptional marksman while still in his early teens. After fighting in the French and Indian Wars on the side of the British, he began his career as a trailblazer and guide (and also served two terms in the Virginia legislature), per Biography. He helped blaze the Wilderness Trail through Virginia's Cumberland Gap. This route west opened Kentucky and the Ohio River Valley to white American colonization.

He founded a settlement, Fort Boonesborough, on Native American land in 1775, which inevitably led to conflicts with the Cherokee and Shawnee tribes, per Biography. He was wounded in battle and on another occasion taken prisoner, but through it all, he managed to stay alive. Boone was less fortunate with his business dealings and lost his Kentucky property for failing to properly register it, and was robbed of other settlers' money, leading to a lot of angry residents, per History and Biography.

A Misreported Death And A Casket



Daniel Boone trying out his casket© Print Collector/Getty Images

In 1799, after being sued by some of Fort Boonesborough's citizens, he and his family moved further west, to Missouri. By then, Boone had become a legend, helped along by a ghost-written autobiography that came out in 1784, per Kentucky Humanities. His fame eventually spread from the U.S. to Europe. The romantic poet Lord Byron even included Boone in his epic poem "Don Juan," published a year before Boone's death, in which Byron portrays him as the quintessential frontiersman who preferred "wilds of deepest maze" to "cities caged," per JSTOR.

Like the writer Mark Twain who was born 15 years after Boone's death in the same state, who once quipped to a British reporter that "the report of my death was an exaggeration," the nation's newspapers prematurely reported Boone had died in 1818, according to the 1992 book "Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer." The mistake only strengthened Boone's mythic status. He in fact lived for two more years, partially blind and arthritic, but still active, per the book. In the years following his wife Rebecca's death in 1813, to whom he'd been married for more than 50 years, mortality was a subject that weighed heavily on him.

Two Graves And Rumors About Burying The Wrong Body



Daniel Boone's grave© Nagel Photography / Shutterstock

Daniel Boone even had his casket built while he was still living and would often inspect it. His granddaughter would shudder while watching him "thump around his coffin, whistling so happy and content," and Boone often told her that he was tired of living, according to "Daniel Boone: The Life and Legend of an American Pioneer." When he did finally succumb, the news quickly traveled across the country, and the newspapers soon filled with stirring eulogies to Boone. The Missouri legislature, then amid writing the state's constitution, took the day off in his honor and wore black armbands for a month, according to "Daniel Boone."

After Boone's death in 1820, his family buried him in Marthasville, Missouri, next to his wife, per *Roadside America*. In 1845, the Kentucky legislature asked the state of Missouri for permission to move the remains of Daniel Boone and his wife to a brand-new cemetery in Frankfort, Kentucky, per *Kentucky Humanities* (pg. 19). After some pushback, their bodies were exhumed and reburied, with an imposing monument added to their graves in 1860, per "Daniel Boone." But many claim the Kentuckians removed the wrong body, per *Roadside America*. It wasn't until 2010 that it was conceded at least some of Daniel Boone's bones had made the journey from Missouri to Kentucky.