

### 3. Goodbye to the World

FATE came plodding down the Yadkin Valley Road one day, leading a pack-horse. Fate had for the moment assumed the guise of a backwoods peddler, and his name was John Finley. It was nearly fourteen years since Boone and he had fled for their lives after Braddock's defeat.

There is no reason to suppose that the two men had ever met since. There was no particular reason why they should ever have met again; men scattered far and wide upon that wild frontier. And yet one day John Finley with his peddler's pack drew up at Daniel Boone's cabin door. He was just one more of those itinerant merchants who wandered with their moveable stores among the backwoods settlements, which were so nearly self-sufficing that a merchant with an ordinary country store would have starved to death. Still, there were a few things backwoods ingenuity could not produce; and frontier wives and daughters loved bright ribbons, fine cloth, odd knick-knacks as much as any other women.

Years later, in Missouri, Daniel's son Nathan remembered Finley; how he stabled his spare nags in the Boone stables; and most of all he remembered the yarns Finley spun beside the cabin fire. Kaintuck'—there was a land for you. Game in such abundance as no man dreamed of. A deer at every lick. Buffalo thick upon the traces. Herds so huge that a man had to be careful lest he be crushed to death in their mad stampedes. The

ground rumbling with their hoofs. At the Falls of the Ohio, wild geese and ducks so plentiful there was no need even to kill them. All a man could eat were drawn by the current over the falls and thrown up freshly killed on the banks below. One might pick up enough fresh fowl for dinner any day.

And land—land such as a man might dream of. Well watered, lush and green, with fertile soil in all directions. Endless acres for the taking. A settler's paradise. A hunter's paradise, too, with deerskins at a dollar each.

Indians, of course. Danger to be outwitted. White man's brains and rifles against red woodcraft. But not too much danger. Finley had gone down the Ohio in 1767, landed on the Kentucky shore, received a hearty welcome from the Indians, and had gone inland on a hunting expedition with them. They were friendly enough—to traders. He set up his trading-post in the midst of Kentucky, exchanging "Indian goods" as fast as the delighted redskins could bring back the peltry. Then he had struggled back up the Ohio with his loaded canoe as far as western Pennsylvania, where he could change his pelts into good hard cash.

David Hall, an old pioneer, remembered those thrilling tales forty years after, when Kentucky had been won for the white man and there was only land to quarrel over: "A man by name of John Finley came to that country and informed the deponent, Daniel Boone and several others that he had been a prisoner [actually a trader, but perhaps a little of both] among the Indians and had been on the waters of the Kentucky River where there was a great advantage of profit to be made by hunting and trapping and directed us how to find said Kentucky River."

Finley wanted to go back into this land of swift and easy profits and he wanted to travel overland. But he could hardly hope to survive that dangerous journey without a skillful

woodsman as "pilot." Was it pure chance that he ran into Daniel Boone? Did he remember him from Braddock's expedition? Did he hear his name mentioned in the western settlements of Pennsylvania? All three stories are told.

John Finley came at the turning point in Daniel Boone's career. In fact, he *was* the turning point. Daniel Boone was uneasy. The farm provided a living but not much more. Boone was in debt. Sometimes he was sued in the local court at Salisbury, where old Squire Boone had been a justice. The lawsuits meant new debts to Richard Henderson's law firm. A man could always hunt and there was comfort in that. But new settlers were coming in. He fretted as the land filled up. His heart was in the wilderness.

Social lines were beginning to draw tighter in North Carolina. Grafting officials oppressed the land-holders with false and fantastic fees. These were the years when the wild disorder of the "Regulators" grew in the backwoods as a protest; when a mob of them beat one unpopular attorney in the very courtroom and dragged another out of it by his heels; when Boone's friend, Judge Richard Henderson, had to flee from the bench; when the mob seized and ran the court to suit itself (leaving wild, profane abuse on the pages of its staid legal record, where the entries still remain), until at length the militia came to turn its arms against its own fellow-citizens.

The Regulators were completely crushed in a pitched battle at the Alamance, but their bitterness and discontent remained. Governor Tryon of North Carolina was brutal, domineering, bloodthirsty. He tried to bully the courts into executing more men. Families began to move as far west as possible, to get beyond the reach of such a government. The Watauga country, Powell's Valley, the Clinch Valley, the Cumberland country, received more and more settlers, on the very edge of Kentucky. Their minds as well as their eyes turned westward. Plenty of

hardy, bitter men were ready to break with North Carolina entirely by the time Daniel Boone led the way to Kentucky a few years later.

Daniel Boone had no part in "the Regulation," but his Yadkin home was in the midst of the disturbances and he shared the general discontent. The hand of the royal governor was too heavy. Taxes were too high. Out in Kaintuck' a man could stand up.

No one realized better than Boone's friend Judge Richard Henderson how wide that discontent was. He had condemned some of the Regulators to death; but with the other judges he had stood out stoutly against the merciless governor's illegal effort to sway the court to needless severity. If Boone needed encouragement, this was the man to provide it. Boone had been served with a summons requiring him to appear in court at Salisbury in March, 1769. Henderson was there to defend him. John Stuart, Boone's brother-in-law, and John Finley went along to court. This was their chance to discuss their plans with Henderson.

The new country was a mystery; Finley knew nothing of trails overland. Cherokee war parties, however, attacked the Shawnees and other Indians north of the Ohio, and the route they followed was called the "Warriors' Path." Find the Warriors' Path and the problem was solved. Finley was not skilled enough to strike off into the forests. But Boone was a woodsman who could find his way anywhere. Why not go together?

Daniel and Squire Boone, their brother-in-law John Stuart, and Finley determined to visit this earthly paradise. They would need good weather—that meant a spring start. Squire Boone would stay behind long enough to get the crops in and, following in the late autumn or early winter, would arrive with fresh supplies just about the time the party needed them.

It was to be a hunting trip; the spice of adventure was in it;

but it was also a business enterprise involving a good deal of capital for a backwoods farmer—horses, lead, powder, salt, flour, blankets, camp supplies, plenty of traps.

Richard Henderson undoubtedly was somewhere in the background. He and Daniel Boone both attended the same session of court in Salisbury, the county seat, on March 16, 1769, a few weeks before Boone set out. Probably it was Henderson who supplied the capital. Boone is said to have been indebted to him already. But with deerskins fetching a good price and London clamoring for beaverskins there should be money in the venture.

And there was land! It might well be what Boone liked to call "a great speck," a profitable speculation.

They started from Daniel Boone's cabin on the first of May, 1769, with three other men as "camp-keepers"—Joseph Holden, James Mooney, and William Cool, or Cooley. These men seem to have been taken along as employees of the others—a practice which Boone followed in other hunting trips late in life. If all went well, Boone, Finley, and Stuart would have little time for pot-hunting and the preparation of skins. They would give all their time to hunting and exploration.

All six were mounted, and equipped with blankets or bearskins, a camp kettle, salt, tools, traps, and enough rations to last until they reached really good hunting grounds, after which they would have to live entirely off the country.

Finding the way proved easier than they had expected. At Martin's Station they passed the last settlements, only then being established. A "hunter's trace" which other white men had followed took them to Cumberland Gap. Here they touched the Warriors' Path. It proved to be plainly marked; there was no trouble keeping on the right route. Following the Warriors' Path for some distance, they bore westward and eventually

camped near the headwaters of the west branch of the Rockcastle River.

The party moved rather slowly, probably hunting for venison on the way and perhaps beginning to hunt for hides from the very start. They could not at best make very good time, for the country was rough and wild.

Of the Indians they saw no sign. There probably were no Indians about, for Kentucky was only a hunting ground without permanent villages. By June 7 they had reached Station Camp Creek, still so called because they built their base camp here. Finley had formerly traded with Indians somewhere near this spot. As they had been traveling for some time in bad weather, they craved the comfort of permanent shelter. They set about constructing it.

Leaving the others to their hunting, Boone pushed on alone until he reached the summit of Big Hill, on the height of land between the Rockcastle and Kentucky Rivers. Here he could look down into the rich, level land, game-filled, fertile, beautiful, that he had come to find. Farther off, in the distance, the country seemed to change; but perhaps his eyes deceived him. It was too far off; he was not sure. Daniel Boone went back to camp.

It was now Finley's turn to push off alone. He was soon back with news that he had located the temporary Indian hunting village of Es-kip-pa-kith-i-ka, where he had formerly traded. The huts had been burned, but the stockade and the gate posts still stood. He was sure of the place now. Boone and Stuart went back with him to see it while the camp-keepers went on with their work.

Then Boone and Finley set off on a joint tour of exploration. After they had traveled for some time and had gone too far to get back to Station Camp, Finley was taken ill. Though he seemed to be in no danger, he was obviously unable to go on.

Providing him with food and shelter, Boone left him to recuperate alone and pushed on into the country north of the Kentucky River. Again he climbed a hill, and again scanned the landscape of "this terrestrial paradise." It was Boone's peak in Darien.

On the way back he found Finley well enough to move, and together they explored the Elkhorn Valley before returning to Station Camp.

The hunters now set to work in earnest, hunting in pairs. Each party went out in a different direction and brought their deerskins back to Station Camp at an agreed date after several days in the forest. One pair occasionally stayed in camp, preparing skins. Smaller temporary camps were scattered here and there. Still there was no Indian "sign," though the hunting party had been careless enough to make their station camp close to the Warriors' Path on which any hunting or war parties going that way would be certain to travel. They soon learned how unwise that had been.

The first attack came on December 22, 1769. Boone and John Stuart were following a buffalo trace through a canebrake, and were crossing a low hill near the Kentucky River, when they ran suddenly into a mounted party of Shawnees returning from a hunting trip in the Green River country to their homes north of the Ohio. Taken wholly by surprise as the Indians came bursting out of the canebrake, the two white men were seized without a chance to resist. They were ordered to take the Indians to their various camps. Tomahawks, suggestively raised, left no doubt what would happen if the white hunters were stubborn.

At the first camp visited, one of the camp-keepers was almost surprised, but Boone contrived to warn him and get him away into the woods while the Indians were still too busy gathering up their plunder to notice his presence. Thus warned off, the others lay low so effectually that the Shawnees seem never to

have realized how many white men were in the party. The stores of skins in the outlying camps were trifling. While they were being robbed, the other four hunters should have been swiftly clearing the main stock of skins at Station Camp and getting the horses and peltry out of reach, relying on Boone and Stuart to delay the Indians as long as possible. But to Boone's dismay, when the Indians reached Station Camp all the horses and the stock of skins and peltry which six men had worked seven months to accumulate were still there.

"The time of our sorrow was now arrived," says Boone in the story of his adventures which he later gave to John Filson. He had staked everything on this trip—time, money, even his life. It was maddening to see all his profits and his little capital vanishing into the greedy hands of the raiding red men.

The delighted Indians gathered up everything of value in the camp, including rifles and ammunition. Then, with their two captives, the band moved off through the woods. The attitude of the Indians was that of any landed proprietors toward intruders. They seem to have had no intention of killing their prisoners so long as they offered no resistance. They were at peace with the English colonies. But they regarded the peltry as their own legitimate property because it came from their game. A sociologically inclined Shawnee later explained to a white friend that the game was the Indians' cattle, and killing it was downright theft.

Boone and Stuart were released unhurt after a few days. They were even provided with moccasins, a doeskin for patch-leather, a small "trading gun," and enough powder and shot to kill food for themselves on the way to the settlements.

The two were then told that they might go this time, but that if they again tried to hunt in Kentucky, they might expect the worst. Captain Will, on behalf of the Indians' hunting party, adjured the two white hunters: "Now, brothers, go home



and stay there. Don't come here any more, for this is the Indians' hunting ground, and all the animals, skins, and furs are ours; and if you are so foolish as to venture here again you may be sure the wasps and yellow-jackets will sting you severely."

The words so impressed themselves on Boone's mind that he later dreamed he was being stung by yellow-jackets. The early settlers believed in dreams and premonitions. Boone interpreted this one to mean that he would be wounded by Indians. As it turned out he was right, and he named the stream on whose banks he had received the warning "Dreaming Creek." By that name Kentucky knows it still.

The two hunters shook hands with the Indians and parted.

The Indians quite definitely wanted the white men to get out of Kentucky and to stay out. They had dealt with Boone and Stuart as they usually dealt with poachers when they wished to be lenient. Boone's friend, Benjamin Cleveland, and hunters with him, caught by Cherokees while hunting beyond Cumberland Gap, were likewise robbed of everything they had, even their hats and shoes. But the Indians were careful to give them an old shot-gun and enough ammunition to provide food before ordering them out of the country. The chief known to the whites as Captain Dick, meeting another hunting party, directed the intruders to "his" river, where he assured them they would find plenty of game. A model of aboriginal tact, Captain Dick added a delicate hint: "Kill it, *and go home.*" White men had no business in Kentucky. When Captain Will robbed Boone and his companions, he doubtless thought he was being very kind to white trespassers who deserved a far worse fate.

Furious at their losses and by no means willing to admit the validity of Shawnee ethics, Boone and Stuart had not the least intention of going home. Boldly following their captors' trail, they were presently able to recover four or five horses. Stuart tried in vain to find his own horse, of which he was especially

fond, and this delayed them and added to their danger. Nevertheless, they managed to get away undiscovered, and rode all night long, putting many miles between themselves and the Indians.

At dawn they paused to let the horses rest and feed. Boone stretched out on the ground to rest. Stuart had just bent over to tie his moccasins, when his ear, close to the ground, caught a rumble. He looked up hastily to see Captain Will and his band galloping over the hillock close behind, the sunlight glinting on their rifles. Before the white men could so much as mount, the Indians were on them.

Even under the provocation they had received, the Shawnees showed exceptional forbearance. Boone and Stuart bore two perfectly good scalps but the Indians offered no violence. Hugely amused at their failure to escape, they ejaculated, "Steal hoss, ha?" tied one of the horse-bells around Boone's neck and compelled him to caper about for their entertainment.

When the Indians were ready, they marched the two white hunters off to the north again, considerately informing them that they would be released as soon as the band had crossed the Ohio River. By that time the horses would be safe from further attempts at recapture.

A few nights later, however, as the party went into camp, Boone and Stuart bolted for the nearest canebrake. They could hear shouts from the Indians, who hastily made sure the horses were secure and then began to circle the brake, hoping to catch the prisoners as they emerged. Boone and Stuart, however, stayed in the tangles of the cane. This time they eluded pursuit and got safely away on foot.

Hurrying back to their camp, they found it abandoned. The other four hunters, giving them up for lost, had started back for the settlements. But they had not gone very far, and the other two soon overtook them.

Holden, Mooney, and Cooley had had enough. They wanted to get back to the settlements while they still had hair on their heads. Finley led them back, and as he disappears among the trees, he disappears also from history. It is said that he went north to Pennsylvania. He may have been the John Finley who was robbed of five hundred pounds worth of goods by the Indians a year or two later.

The hunters now exercised every precaution. It was not long before Daniel Boone had occasion for it. Just before or just after he and Stuart parted with the other four, while hunting, he saw strangers approaching through the trees. The leathery-skinned frontiersmen, in their wild dress, looked very much like Indians at a little distance and it was wise to take no chances. Boone made sure of his rifle and prepared for action. Then, doubtless from behind a tree, he sent out the usual challenge of the frontier:

“Hello, strangers! Who are you?”

Back came a welcome reply:

“White men and friends!”

He had blundered into his brother Squire, with a companion named Alexander Neeley, coming to keep the appointment made in the spring. They had found Boone’s camp fire of the day before and knew that he was somewhere near. To them, there was nothing remarkable in this meeting in that almost trackless wilderness. The brothers were both skilled woodsmen; they had made an appointment to meet; and they had met. That was all.

Squire Boone had brought fresh horses, traps, and ammunition. The four went back to Station Camp, but they knew now it was too close to the Warriors’ Path. They moved. The new camp is supposed to have been somewhere near the junction of the Red River with the Kentucky.

The hunters had one minor brush with the Indians, inter-

esting mainly because it is responsible for the odd name of Lulbegrud Creek. Daniel Boone, who liked to read when he had the chance, testified later that his party "had with us for our pleasure" a book. It was *Gulliver's Travels*. They were whiling away a long evening in camp with Swift's account of Glumdelick and its inhabitants, the Lulbegruds, when Indians approached. When the hunters had driven them off, Neeley remarked whimsically that they had disposed of the Lulbegruds. Amused by this unexpectedly literary aspect of wilderness warfare, they gave the creek near camp a name from Swift. It is still called Lulbegrud Creek.

As winter advanced, though they still hunted for food, their main business was trapping. To cover as much ground as possible, the quartet divided. For safety's sake they still worked in pairs, but even this precaution did not long avail.

Daniel Boone and John Stuart were very close friends. Boone always asserted that he regarded Stuart as a brother—no idle expression in so closely united a family—and they usually hunted together. At length the two decided to separate, meeting every two weeks at their outlying camp. Stuart crossed to the south side of the Kentucky River in a small canoe that they had built.

He was never seen again.

His failure to return did not at first alarm Boone, since the river was badly swollen with rain and crossing was difficult. But when the water subsided and Stuart, who had a reputation for the precise fulfillment of agreements, still failed to return, Boone went over after him. He ranged the woods. He found Stuart's trail; he found a recent fire, he found his initials carved in a tree; but Stuart he did not find.

Five years later, however, when Boone was cutting the Wilderness Road to Kentucky, one of his men found a skeleton in a hollow sycamore at the Rockcastle River crossing, miles away. There was no sign of a rifle, but the powder-horn which lay

with the body had a brass band with Stuart's initials, and by this Boone recognized the body of his hunting mate. The left arm was broken and the bone still bore the discoloration of a bullet, but there were no traces of other injuries and the skull showed no signs of the scalping knife.

Indians? Accident? Animals attacking a wounded hunter? No one will ever know.

Mortally wounded by the Shawnees, Stuart may have dragged himself to cover and then died silently. North American wild animals are not usually dangerous to man unless wounded or cornered—but Stuart was a hunter. Wounded only in the arm, he ought to have been able to reach the Kentucky's banks and shout for help—but Boone never heard him if he called at all.

Long after that someone found an abandoned trapline in the woods. Stuart's? No one ever knew.

Silent and mysterious always, the wilderness had struck. Once. It was to strike again.

In spite of Stuart's disappearance, the Boones continued their hunt. Men vanished often enough in the wilderness. For all they knew then, Stuart might be a captive of some roving Shawnee band, as Boone and he had been before. If so, he might escape this time as he had escaped twice already. There was no Indian war at the moment and he would escape torture—probably. If he was dead—well, men died violently, mysteriously, and often in the "dark and bloody ground."

Alexander Neeley, however, was not so philosophical. Violent death was common enough, though not so common as it was to become in a few years. But this death which struck from nowhere, so that a man vanished wholly, death inexplicable, unaccountable, implacable, unknown, was too much for him. The Boones were made of sterner stuff than he, and Neeley did not mind admitting it. He announced that he was going

home, and started for the settlements, leaving the Boone brothers entirely alone.

Though they had declined to be driven out of the hunting grounds, the Boones were taking no chances they did not have to take.

Once it looked as if the Indians had found their camp. The Boones made a new one. They did their cooking at night, to conceal the smoke. The fire itself was sheltered so that no flame could be seen. They blinded the trail leading into their refuge. Part of it they concealed by walking some distance in a stream, a common Indian device. Where possible, they moved over fallen trees and smooth rocks which showed no trace of their passing. They broke the trail by swinging on the tough, dangling vines of wild grapes. And very close to camp they covered their footprints with leaves.

By May of 1770 ammunition was running low and a new store of skins was ready to go back for sale in the settlements. It began to look as if their Kentucky venture might still be profitable. Loading his pack-horses, Squire set off with the proceeds of their long hunt, promising to return with "a new recruitment of horses and ammunition."

He left his brother in absolute solitude in the forest, "without bread, salt, or sugar, or even a horse or dog." The last two were no great lack, for they would have been hard to conceal or keep quiet; and it had for some time been apparent that Daniel's life would have to be extremely quiet unless it was to be extremely short. As for bread and salt, early woodsmen often ran out of them, though they usually grumbled about it.

More serious was the lack of ammunition. Daniel had enough to keep himself in fresh meat and to keep off the Indians if they found him. But he had to husband his supply for emergencies. It was impossible to hunt on a commercial scale and lay in a new supply of skins, and it was too late in the season to

trap. Instead of hunting he took to exploring. He toured Kentucky privately—very privately indeed, for Indian hunting parties were now all about. Boone always believed that they found his camp, but only when he was absent. They do not seem to have thought it worth while to waylay him, which would have meant lying in ambush for days at a time. Indians on the warpath would have done just that; hunting parties would not take the trouble.

When things looked dangerous, Boone retired to the thick tangles of the canebrakes—not always the nearest ones. Sometimes he made camp and built his fire in one place—then slipped off a mile or two and slept in the cane without a fire. Even a Shawnee does not go exploring canebrakes in the middle of a wilderness night. There was still no war and the Shawnees probably were not quite sure who he was and not very eager to find him. One stray hunter more or less made very little difference, though it would have been awkward if they had captured this stubborn white man for the third time after he had twice been told to go home. But so long as Boone could stay in the brakes he was safe. The cane, looking very much like a gigantic stalk of corn, grew to heights of ten, twenty, even thirty feet and its tangled masses might extend for miles.

Most of the Indians, whose signals he sometimes heard around him as he lay in the cane, very likely did not know he was there at all. Even when they found his camp, they may not have known it for a white man's. Few white men make camps like Indians; but Boone was an old hand in the woods, who had lived near Indians all his life.

After Squire left, he "passed a few days uncomfortably," and then seems to have been quite content. It was a year since he had seen Rebecca and the children. It would be almost another year before he saw them again. But Squire would carry news that he was alive and see that they were well cared for.

Meantime, he ranged the woods as far north as the Ohio River, and as far west as the Falls of the Ohio (Louisville), becoming thoroughly acquainted with the Kentucky and Licking Valleys. Boone was happy enough. This was the life he loved. The forest, game, freedom from social restraints, distinctions, taxes, inconvenient neighbors. He had "elbow room" in abundance. What more could a man ask?

Occasionally he saw Indians on the northern bank of the Ohio. The river was too narrow to make such proximity very safe, but in every case he escaped detection. On his way back to the Kentucky River he left the watercourses and struck off across country. Once he came upon an Indian fishing from a fallen tree which projected over a stream. But, as Boone used to tell the story in after years, "as I was looking at the fellow, he tumbled into the river, and I saw him no more." The implication was that Daniel at the moment was looking at that particular redskin over the sights of a rifle.

It was a favorite joke. His hearers did not always remember it exactly. Sometimes there were two Indians. Sometimes there was only one. But the essentials were always the same. Boone never explicitly admitted killing or even firing. But he "heard a gun crack and it sounded just like mine." Sometimes, more explicitly, it "sounded very much like Tick-Licker," his favorite rifle. And then "they tumbled in the water and I never saw them any more."

He used to remark of other Indians casually encountered in the forests, "While I looked at them they fell down and never crossed my path again." Never a killer and always rather well-disposed to the Indians, Boone had, as John Floyd once wrote, "very little of the *War spirit*. He never liked to take life and always avoided it when he could." He once told his son Nathan that in his whole life he was sure of having killed only one Indian and that was at the Blue Licks Battle. Sometimes he



raised the score to three—never any more. In the heat of battle it was hard to be sure whether a shot went home. One fired as fast as possible and reloaded with equal speed. There is little doubt, however, that Boone was a bit too modest about his tally. He himself used to conclude with the remark: "But many was the fair fire that I have had at them."

On this occasion, he killed an unsuspecting fisherman solely because he feared for his own life if captured again. Then, since there might be other Indians about, he made a wide detour until he struck the mountains in the east, and "circled around to his camp."

Kentucky was an easy place to hide in. Like all limestone country, it is full of caves; and during these solitary explorations Daniel Boone found shelter in a good many of them. He lived in one cave in Mercer County and left another of his carvings on a tree near by—"D.B.—1770."

With this cave as a base camp, he explored Dick's River, and near its junction with the Kentucky had one of his most famous adventures. Wandering along the precipices which edge Dick's River, he suddenly found himself cut off by Indians on three sides with a sheer cliff on the other. It looked hopeless, but as he glanced desperately backward he saw that a sugar maple reached from the river bottom well up toward the summit of the cliff. Leaping into the tree top, he managed to catch the branches, break his fall, and let himself down unhurt amid a chorus of astonished "ughs" from the red men peering down from the cliffs above at a paleface who was melting into the landscape.

It was probably during this period of solitude that Daniel had another famous adventure. He had "killed a buffalo and thought to have a good breakfast." But he had frightened the entire herd, which stampeded toward the hunter. Boone escaped only by getting behind a tree and punching the terrified beasts

with his rifle barrel as they rushed past. He once saved a group of companions from another stampeding herd by shooting the leader. Behind the huge carcass the white men crouched while the buffalo, dividing, rumbled harmlessly by, a great deal more frightened than the hunters.

Boone loved solitude. He also loved adventurous hunting of this sort. There was no reason why he should not have gone back to the settlements with Squire. The trip would have been safer and easier had the brothers gone together; and since he could not hunt in Squire's absence, Daniel could add nothing to their profits. But Daniel stayed. Was it just because he loved this solitary life? Or was there another reason? Those long exploring trips—were they pure love of adventure? Or was the Great Idea already bubbling in the woodsman's brain? Did he and Richard Henderson already have land speculation schemes afoot?

At all events, by the time he kept his appointment with his brother on July 27, 1770, at their old camp, no white man in the world knew the Kentucky area so well as Daniel Boone. He was ready to lead the settlers who were soon to follow.

Squire Boone had traveled to and from the settlements undisturbed, had sold their furs, paid off debts, provided for both families, and brought back new supplies. The two immediately moved farther east to begin hunting. According to legend, they moved down the Kentucky River, settled in a cave near the mouth of Marble Creek (Jessamine County) and then moved to another cave on Hickman Creek in the same county. Here the irrepressible Daniel carved his initials in the soft stone, but only a huge "D" survived.

Once they were alarmed to find their camp had been disturbed in their absence, but further examination showed the raider was a wolf. Trailing the marauder to its den they killed the mother and made an unsuccessful effort to bring up the

cubs, which, as Boone later remarked to his eldest grandson, in spite of all he could do, remained wolves still. Another wolf, raiding the camp, ran off with Daniel's hat. In spite of delineations by imaginative artists, Daniel Boone disliked coonskin caps and always insisted on a hat. The loss of this one in the midst of the forest was a great annoyance; but a hasty shot brought down the wolf. Daniel recovered his headgear.

As autumn approached, Squire Boone made another trip to the settlements. This time he was so slow in returning that Daniel started east to meet him. On the way he came upon an aged Indian, left by his tribe to die. Touched by the old man's helplessness, Boone went back half a mile for a deer which he had killed and only partly eaten. This he carried to the old Indian and then left him. Not long after this, he saw a camp fire ahead. Approaching stealthily, he recognized his brother.

The two may have returned to the Kentucky River; but if so, it was for a brief time only; they soon went southward to the Green and Cumberland Rivers. Perhaps this was because the hostile northern Indians were now too numerous for comfort. Or it may have been because Daniel had seen what he really had come to see, and now wished merely to make a little honest money out of deerskins before embarking on the great project of his life.

Boone was in high spirits. He had seen and thoroughly explored the land he had dreamed of so long. Two consignments had been sent back to the settlements. Soon there would be a third, and then he could go home at last.

His high spirits led to an amusing incident which has found its way into the Boone legend. Another party, famous as the "Long Hunters" because of their prolonged stay in the wilderness, had been hunting farther south for nearly a year and a half. Returning, they reached the Green River country at about the same time as the Boones. According to a story widely told,

they were alarmed one day by a strange sound in the forest near them. Veteran woodsmen though they were, the Long Hunters admitted they had never heard anything that remotely resembled it.

In the wilderness it is wisest to assume that anything unknown is dangerous. As one man the Long Hunters reached for their long rifles; and Casper Mansker, already famous as a woodsman, slipped silently off to investigate. It might be dangerous to follow up the mysterious sound, but it was not difficult, for it came steadily from the same direction. That was suspicious. Real woods sounds usually move about. Was this a new kind of Indian decoy?

Gripping his loaded rifle, Mansker dodged from tree to tree—and came upon Daniel Boone lying flat on his back on an outspread deerskin, all alone and singing cheerfully to himself, Indians or no Indians, Daniel felt happy that day; and like most men who live much alone, he had a habit of singing or whistling to himself. There are other tales of him, sitting alone by his camp fire singing to a gravely silent audience of rather puzzled dogs!

Leaving the Long Hunters, who did not return till August, he and his brother started back for their home on the Yadkin in March of 1771, their pack-horses loaded with the winter's peltry. By May they were near Cumberland Gap, and almost home; had in fact reached Powell's Valley on the outskirts of the settlements. Here they fell in with their former companion, Alexander Neeley, who after leaving them had made his way safely to the settlements and then, coming out with another hunting party, had lost himself in the woods and was in a wretched state. He had fired away all his ammunition in vain efforts to signal and had had nothing to eat except the meat of a stray dog.

After caring for Neeley's distress, the Boones hurried on.

They had camped for the night and were busy roasting meat for dinner when six or eight Indians appeared. Assuming a friendly attitude, the strangers shared the Boones' dinner. Then these not-very-noble red men proposed to trade their old rifles for the well-kept hunting arms of the Boones. When the brothers refused, the Indians fell upon them and took rifles, horses, skins, and everything else. The infuriated hunters offered resistance in spite of the odds but were overpowered, threatened with tomahawks, and driven off.

Going only a little distance, they hid, noted the direction the Indians took, and then, hurrying off to the settlements for arms and aid, gave chase. As they followed the trail of the robbers, the trails of other Indian bands which had been marauding along the frontier began to join in. The original band had evidently been much reinforced. That looked dangerous but the settlers continued to follow the trail, until one incautious fellow fired at a deer. As the Indians had now been warned of pursuit the party gave up and turned back. It was lucky that they did. An overwhelming force of Indians had been lying in wait for them only a little way ahead. That chance shot at a deer had saved them from a bloody ambush.

Even yet, the Boones were not quite done with their adventures. Continuing their journey home with one companion, they halted to rest in an abandoned cabin. It was not long before they discovered two Indians outside. All three white men fired together and killed both. Daniel and their companion took a rifle each as spoils; Squire Boone took their silver trinkets. This was their sole gain from the latter part of the expedition.

Just after their return a friend ran into Boone, still exasperated over his losses, and made a note of what he said: "I met Daniel Boone below the Holston settlements alone. He informed me that he had spent the two years preceding that time,

in a hunt on Louisa River [now Kentucky River], so called by all the Long Hunters; that he had been robbed by the Cherokee Indians of all the proceeds of this hunt.”

Everything, even equipment, had now been swept away. After two arduous years in the wilderness, Daniel Boone was little if any better off than when he had set out with Finley and the rest. It was fortunate that Squire had been able to get at least two pack trains of skins and pelts safely back, but it was small reward for all they had endured.

At least he had explored Kentucky. The great idea was slowly taking possession of him: Kaintuck’—that was a land, now, where a man could really live. Daniel Boone knew. He had seen it—all of it.