

# Introduction

**A**LTHOUGH Daniel Boone early became an American hero and the subject of innumerable popular sketches of varying merit, he has not hitherto been made the subject of a documented biography based on original sources.

The present study is the result of personal examination of all known original Boone manuscripts, except a few in distant county courthouses or private collections, which have been examined for me and sometimes copied by local investigators. It endeavors to bring together the entire story of Daniel Boone's life without entering into details of merely local interest, such as the exact routes he followed or the exact sites of his camps. Matters of this sort, though of great interest to local historians, who debate them vigorously, are of no special significance to anyone else.

In general, I have ignored mere rumor, except where it is so widespread as to deserve at least passing mention, plainly labeled for what it is. Stories like the one which provides Boone with a Shawnee squaw for his "Indian wife" I have passed over in silence. They are, in the first place, unsupported by anything except folk stories dating from long after Boone's death. They are, in the second place, usually in conflict with the known facts. The Shawnee wife story, for example, is hard to believe not merely in view of Daniel Boone's devotion to his legitimate wife, but also in view of the fact that, except for one

captivity of a few months, Boone never lived among the Shawnees. Similarly, the story that Rebecca Boone had a child by one of Daniel's brothers during one of her husband's long absences in the woods, but that Daniel kept the baby and brought it up as his own, conflicts with the known dates of her children's births.

Much of the material appears in print for the first time; fully half of it has never appeared anywhere except in valuable but obscure local historical journals of strictly limited circulation; and the entire story of Boone's life is here first presented with complete documentation.

I should perhaps add a word as to the direct quotations found in the text. In every case but one, these come directly from first-hand original manuscript sources and are there given as direct quotations. In the one exception (page 382) I have shifted indirect to direct quotation without any change except the personal pronouns. This particular change seems justified, since the manuscript authority is otherwise plainly quoting Boone's exact words, and since the minor alteration is plainly indicated in a note. It should be needless to remark that even manuscript accounts of conversations cannot pretend to stenographic accuracy. In every case where the original manuscript still exists, I have checked quotations by it; where it has disappeared, I have used the best copy available.

Both Professor Jonathan Truman Dorris and Dr. Louise Phelps Kellogg have read the entire manuscript to suggest corrections and improvements. In gratefully acknowledging their assistance, I should add that obviously I accept entire responsibility for any errors that may have crept into my account of a life which is highly controversial at every point.

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