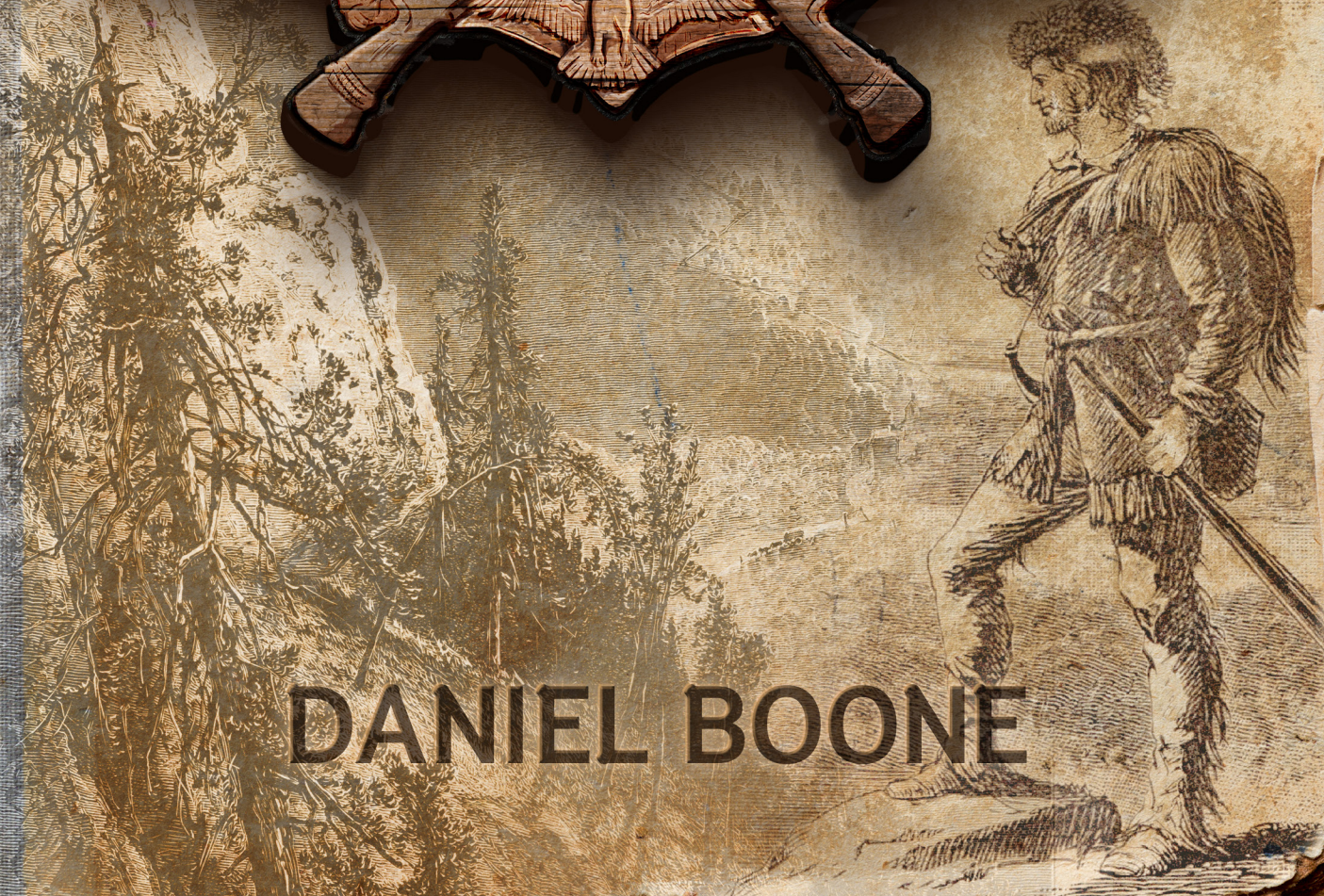




# TRAILBLAZERS OF AMERICA

PragerU



## DANIEL BOONE



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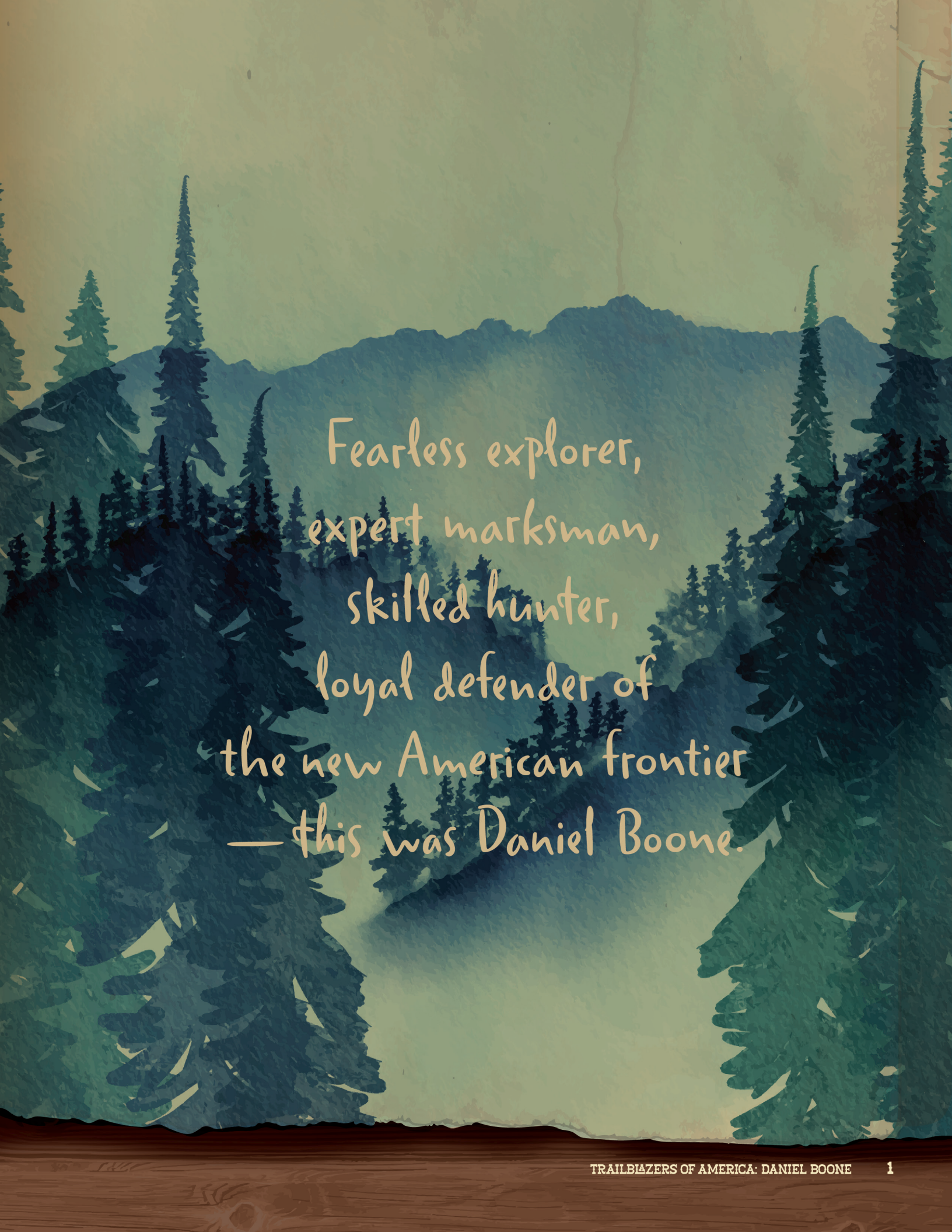
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A watercolor illustration of a forest landscape. In the foreground, several tall, dark green evergreen trees are scattered across the scene. In the middle ground, a range of mountains is depicted with soft, muted green and blue tones. The background is a light, hazy green, suggesting a misty or overcast sky. The overall style is soft and painterly.

Fearless explorer,  
expert marksman,  
skilled hunter,  
loyal defender of  
the new American frontier  
— this was Daniel Boone.



# No Ordinary Job

*North Carolina, Southern Colonies, 1775.*

A sharp knock sounded at the door. Daniel looked at his wife, Rebecca. This was a visit they were expecting.

A few days earlier, Daniel had been offered a job, and any minute now, they would need his answer: *take it or leave it?*

"It doesn't have to be you," Rebecca said. "They can find someone else."

"But they came to me first for a reason," Daniel replied. "I know the land better than anyone. I've hunted it, made my own camps and paths, and I know the dangers..."

He stopped short, knowing he wouldn't help his case if he brought up their oldest son James.

"We have our family to think about," his wife jumped in. "Things are good here. The last time we tried to move to the **frontier**, James was killed. I thought we were going to close that chapter and put it behind us."

But that chapter was far from closed in Daniel's mind. Their son's death was a scalding memory... but it hadn't diminished the fire still alive in him to move west. How could he forget the rushing rivers and the buzzing insects of those beautiful meadowlands? There was still so much left to explore. Tragedy had halted his family's first attempt, but Daniel always hoped for a second chance.

Rebecca sighed. "You have that look in your eye again, Daniel."

"What look?"

"That look you get when you're thinking about the wilderness." Rebecca gave his calloused hands a squeeze. "I know you, Daniel. I know you will never be satisfied until you explore every nook and cranny of those wild lands."

"The land," Daniel breathed, "is paradise. Our family will have a new life there—to spread out, hunt, farm, and do whatever else we like. This'll be like my hunting trips. I'll be gone a couple months, but I'll come back and bring all of you with me. Once I forge this path, it'll be easier for us to move than before."

Rebecca was silent for a long moment.

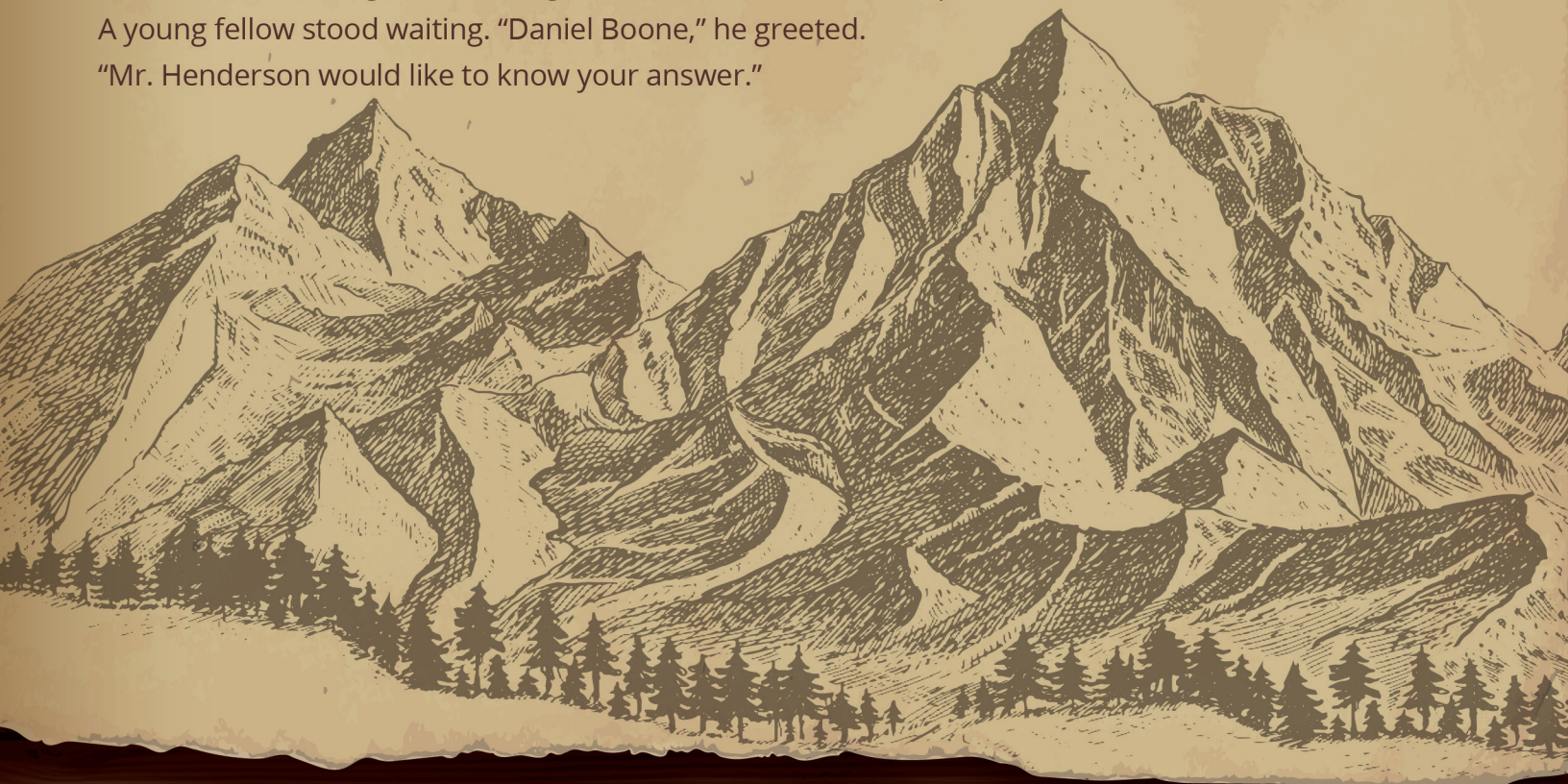
"This isn't for me. It's for you and the kids," he urged. "I can't promise it will be safe, but I promise you, it will be better than staying here under Britain's thumb. The opportunity and freedom... it's all out West."

She nodded, and her eyes were glossy with unshed tears. "I know you will do what is right."

The knock echoed again, more urgent than before. Time was up. Daniel rose to answer the door.

A young fellow stood waiting. "Daniel Boone," he greeted.

"Mr. Henderson would like to know your answer."



# Taming the Trails to Boonesborough

Daniel Boone took the job. In March of 1775, Daniel and a group of 35 axemen set out and carved a path through the rugged **Cumberland Gap**, which was a gateway to the lands local Indians called "**Ken-te-ke**," or "the place of the meadows." Later, these lands were named Kentucky and officially became part of the United States as the 15th state. Before statehood though, Kentucky was a wild place, with dense forests, winding rivers, and formidable mountains.

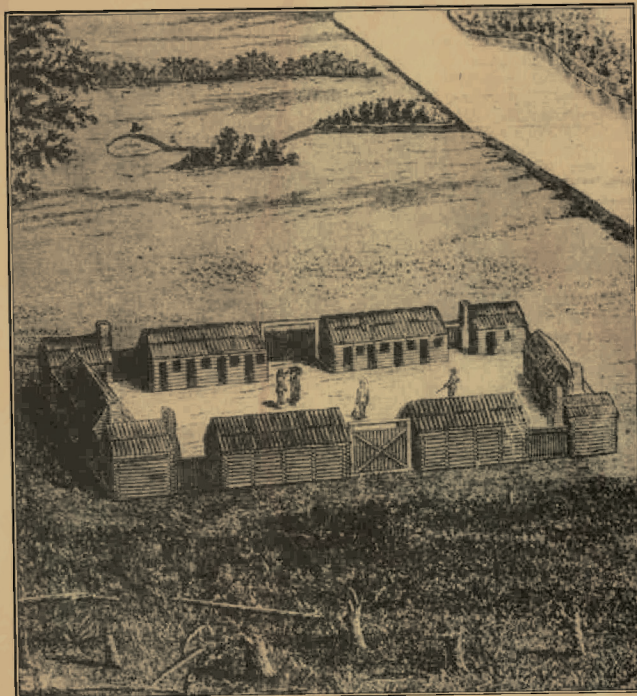
Daniel was familiar with the **Appalachian Mountains**—the largest mountain range in the eastern United States—because they ran not only through Kentucky but his home colony of North Carolina. The mountains provided his family's **livelihood**. Having

received his first rifle at the age of 12, Daniel took to the wilderness trails and never looked back. He spent months at a time hunting and **foraging** to bring back meat and furs to sell to other settlers.

Having seen the bounty of the land on the other side of the Appalachians, Daniel was eager to settle some for his family and stake his claim. However, the colonists still



answered to Great Britain at the time, and following the **Proclamation Line of 1763**, their mother country had strictly ordered them not to move beyond the Appalachians. To pioneer West meant disobedience to the King and Parliament.



*Fort Boonesborough  
in Kentucky*

That didn't stop people like Richard Henderson and his **Transylvania Company** from buying up land claims in the West.

Those claims didn't mean much, though, without settlers to secure the land. Henderson knew Daniel Boone had the drive and the skill to get them there. But first, they needed to clear the way...

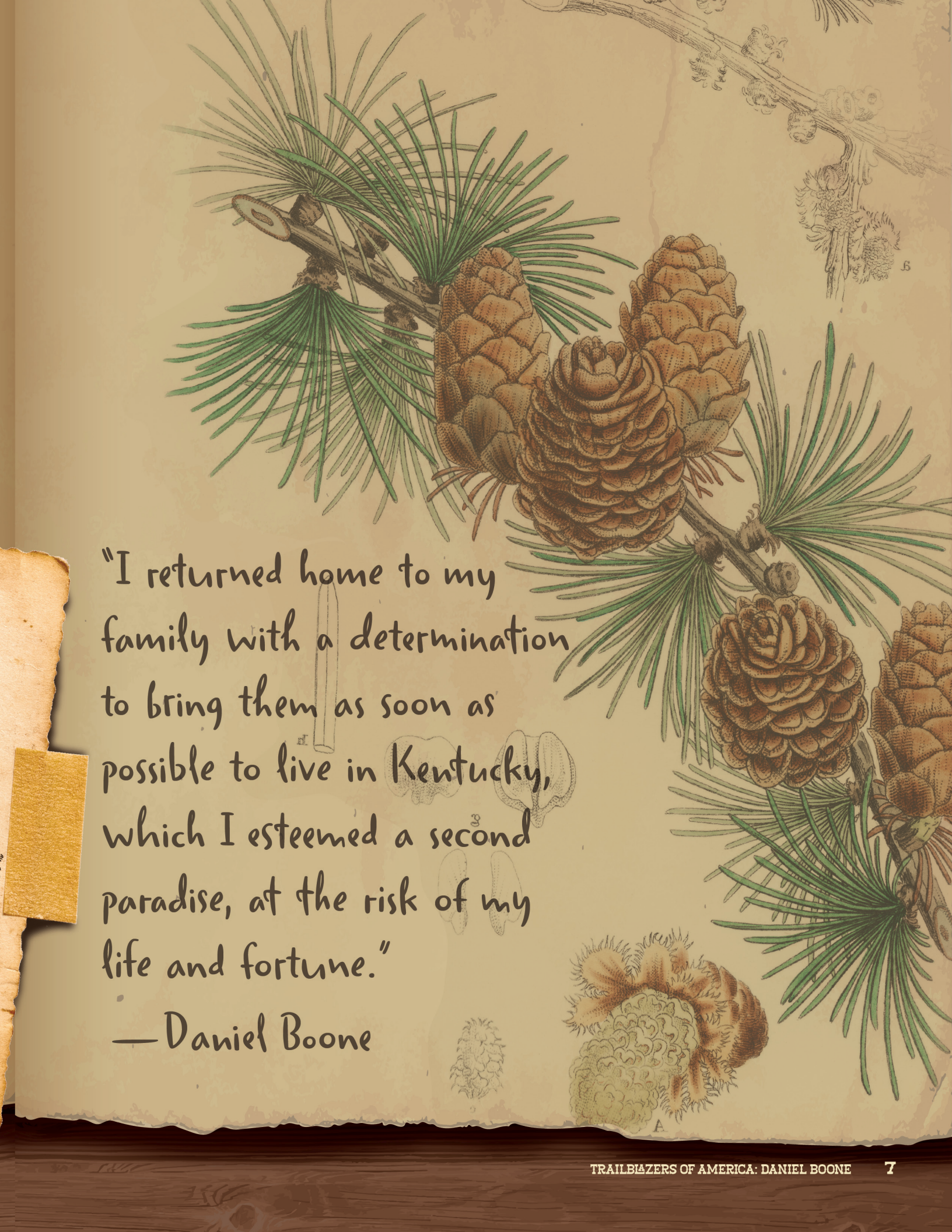
Daniel and his men didn't have much to work with. The only trails that existed were narrow and rough, used by Indian hunters and herds of migrating animals. The men shaped a new path with their grit and determination. With each swing of their axes, they came closer to Kentucky. The trail was steep and narrow, big enough only for people traveling on foot or horseback. The 200-mile trail into the heart of Kentucky would later be called the **Wilderness Road**, and over time it was widened for wagon travel. Thousands would follow it on their journey West in the years to come.

On April 1, 1775, the men began building **Fort Boonesborough**, one of the first settlements established in Kentucky. Only weeks later, the first shots of the American Revolutionary War were fired, launching the colonies into war with Great Britain.

Americans were fighting for their freedom and independence, and this battle spilled over into the frontier. The small group of settlers worked quickly on Boonesborough, knowing a Native American or British attack was likely coming.

Despite the growing conflict, Daniel was able to keep his promise and bring his family to their new home. It was a victory for Boone, but the battle to keep the settler's claim on the land was only just beginning.





"I returned home to my family with a determination to bring them as soon as possible to live in Kentucky, which I esteemed a second paradise, at the risk of my life and fortune."

— Daniel Boone

A FIELD GUIDE TO  
**APPALACHIAN  
ANIMALS**



**EASTERN COUGAR**

These big cats were declared extinct in the 1940s, but they were common in Appalachia during Boone's time. Legend has it that as a teenager, Boone shot a cougar through the heart, just as it leaped at him in attack.



**AMERICAN BLACK BEAR**

Considered the most feared animal in the region, they are the only bear species that lives in the Appalachian Mountains. They are the smallest bears in North America, however, males still often grow to over 500 pounds.



**WHITE-TAILED DEER**

During the time of Boone, these deer were hunted by mountain men, Indians, and predatory animals. It is the most common species of deer in North and South America.



WHITE-TAILED DEER



COUGAR



RACCOON



OPOSSUM



STRIPED SKUNK



BLACK BEAR



COYOTE



RED FOX

A FIELD GUIDE TO  
**APPALACHIAN  
PLANTS**



**TUPELO TREE**

These deciduous trees (meaning they lose their leaves each year) are common in Appalachia. Before falling, its leaves turn magnificent shades of red, orange, and yellow. Some tupelos in Appalachia today are over 500 years old, and it's possible Boone could have once used some of them for shade or cover.

**EASTERN WHITE PINE**

These evergreen conifer trees are found up and down the Appalachian Mountains. They grow long needles and long slender pinecones.



**TULIP TREE**

These hardwood trees have broad leaves and bloom beautiful flowers each spring. Today, it is the state tree of both Tennessee and Kentucky.



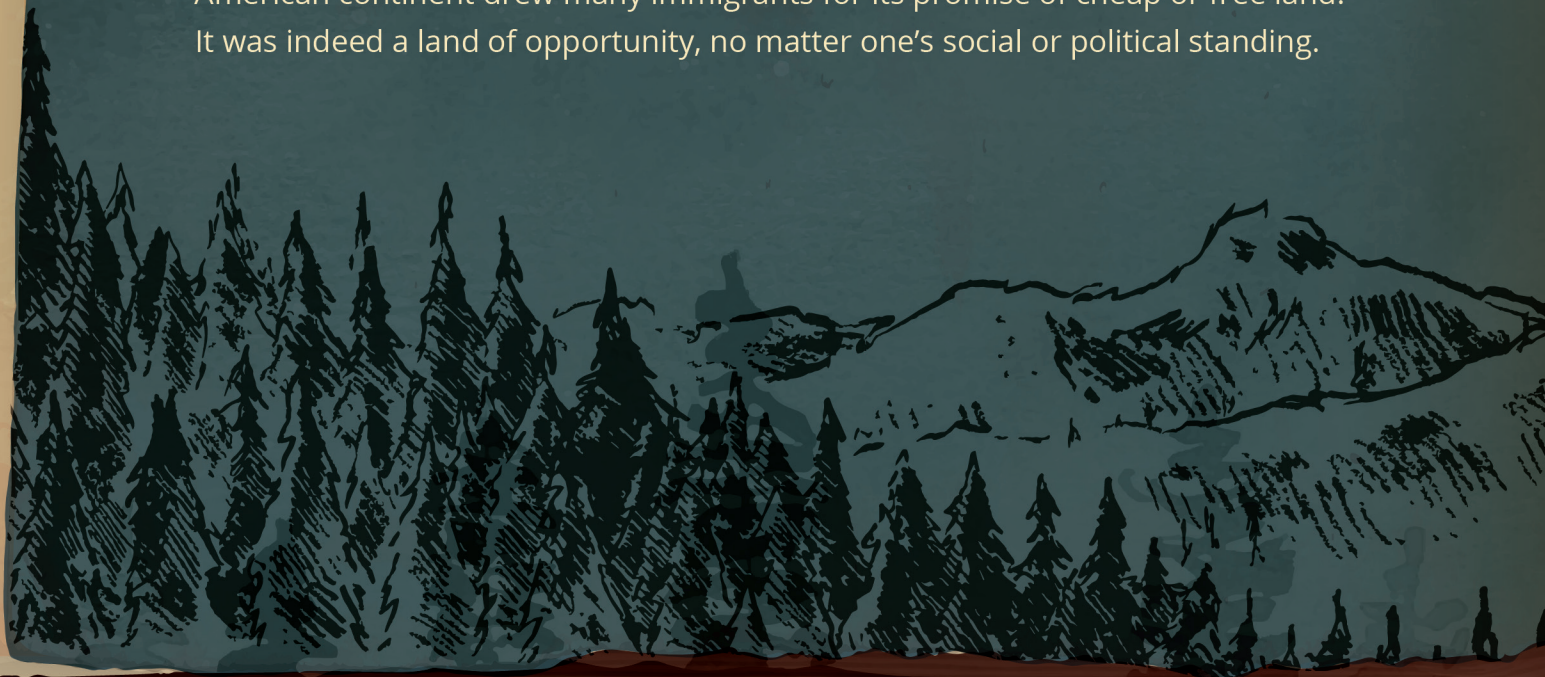
# Why the West?

In early colonial America, the 13 colonies spread from Massachusetts down to Georgia along the Atlantic coast. But people in those colonies were not the only ones living on the continent. Westward, Native American tribes and French fur trappers (with a small number of French settlers in modern Canada) also shared the land, but after winning the **French and Indian War**, the British Empire ultimately claimed France's land in North America in 1763.

The colonists saw this as an opportunity to move West and gain freedom from Britain's rules and control. Under Great Britain's system, settlers faced many restrictions, including paying taxes and exporting their materials and goods back to the mother country.

The people wanted economic freedom. If they moved West, they could settle on fertile farmlands and hunt in the vast forests. The unexplored wilderness beyond the Appalachian Mountains promised rich, untapped resources, and settlers were eager to make their own living.

The colonists also dreamed of owning land. In Europe, there was little access to land and those who did own it were often wealthy and noble. The vast North American continent drew many immigrants for its promise of cheap or free land. It was indeed a land of opportunity, no matter one's social or political standing.



Great Britain tried to stop the colonists from expanding westward, but they ultimately didn't have the power to prevent determined men and women from pursuing the freedom they longed for. It wasn't an easy pursuit though. The pioneers faced difficult terrain, conflicts with Native American tribes, and competition with other settlers. Despite all this, they persevered, eventually becoming an independent nation from the East Coast to the West Coast.

*"Many dark and sleepless nights have I been a companion for owls," wrote Boone through Filson, "separated from the cheerful society of men, scorched by the summer's sun, and pinched by the winter's cold, an instrument ordained to settle the wilderness."*





# A Daring Rescue

*Somewhere along the Kentucky River, July 1776.*

Daniel's heart raced. A small piece of brown cloth stuck to a bush near his foot. He knew it was his daughter's. They were on the right track, but Daniel still felt dread like a weight in his stomach. The Indians had a head start on them.

*Show us where they took you,* Daniel thought. He scoured the area for more clues or signs of a struggle.

"Over here!" someone shouted.

Further ahead, one of his men pointed down a trail with snapped branches and fresh footprints. "The Shawnee must have taken the girls this way."

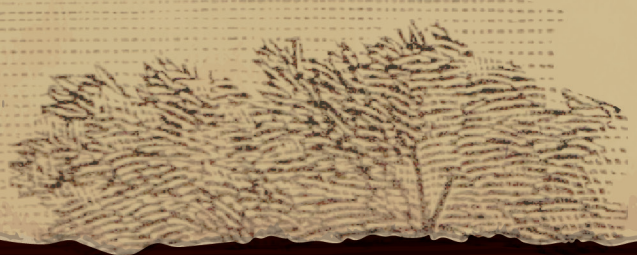
"Let's move," Daniel ordered. He took off down the trail at a run, pulling his gun off his back.

Night would fall soon, and they wouldn't be able to track again until dawn. Daniel paused to catch his breath. All sorts of awful thoughts ran through his mind. *Is Jemima okay? What will I tell Rebecca if I can't find our girl? I promised I would bring back all the girls safely.*

He refocused on the trail, trying to ground himself. Squatting to the earth, he pressed his hands to the cool dirt. That's when he felt it. The faint *thump, thump* that could have been Indian drums or deliberate stomping.

They were close, and Daniel's hunting senses kicked into full alert. He brushed off his hands and crept along the trail more slowly. When the glow of a fire came into view, Daniel motioned for his own men to surround the camp.

He checked to make sure his gun was ready to fire but prayed he wouldn't have to use it. Then, he summoned his courage and gave his men the signal.





AMERICA  
IN THE TIME OF  
BOONE



# Out of the Frying Pan and Into the Fire

Daniel and his men ambushed the Indian captors and rescued the three teenagers, unharmed. After the Indians scattered, they returned with the girls to Boonesborough. Kidnappings, especially of women and girls, were common on the frontier, but the rescue stood out as a famous example of the Boone family character. Jemima, being her father's daughter, knew her best chance at survival was to mark her trail. She and the other two girls broke twigs, faked falling, purposely got thrown off their horses, and left berries and leaves to follow. Daniel tracked her down over three days and got all the girls safely home to their families. It was a happy ending to what could have been a tragedy for Boonesborough.

Life settled back to normal in the fort as the settlers worked hard to survive. One such necessity for the fort's survival was salt. Salt had many uses, including preserving food and treating illness. Though their fort had been built near a **salt lick**, the settlers desperately needed more during the winter of 1777-1778. Daniel led a group of around 30 men to Blue Licks, an area along the nearby Licking River where they would collect water from the springs and boil them to extract the salt. It was cold and difficult work in the middle of winter. After several weeks of successful work, the group faced a tragic turn of events.

On a bitter, cold day in February, Daniel set out to scout and hunt as usual. Several miles away from the group at the river, he found himself suddenly surrounded and seized by Indians. They brought him back to their camp, where Daniel came face to face with the fearsome Shawnee war chief, Black Fish. The chief was leading a war party, and Daniel learned of his intent to capture Boonesborough. With his quick thinking, Daniel offered himself and the other men at the river as prisoners. They would surrender willingly, which meant the Indians could catch a nice reward from the British. Tribes often got paid by the British for bringing in rebellious frontier settlers.

Daniel convinced Black Fish to hold off on attacking the fort, and the chief settled for taking the salt-making party instead. The Shawnee surrounded the men at the river, and Daniel was able to persuade his people to go along with the surrender rather than risk their families' lives back at the fort.

The Indian tribe marched them north to Ohio. When word reached Boonesborough, the settlers were devastated. Many of their leaders, husbands, and fathers were gone. They could only assume the worst had happened, and that they were all dead. Rebecca Boone decided to take five of her children and move back to North Carolina. Jemima, however, remained at the fort, determined to be there when her father returned.

Meanwhile, Daniel was very much alive and plotting his escape.



# On the Edge of Escape

*Chillicothe, Ohio, June 1778.*

It had been five months. Five months of living, working, and hunting with the Shawnee. Every day, Daniel looked for an opportunity to escape, but with no luck. The Shawnee were smart, and they were watching him. But Daniel was watching them, too.

Last week, he'd seen the warriors gather and paint their faces for war. Black Fish was clearly preparing for his attack on Fort Boonesborough. How soon they would set out, he didn't know, but he needed to escape and warn his family. They were all in danger. If the Shawnee reached the fort, it would surely be overrun.

But how would he get away without being suspicious?



Black Fish emerged from his tent, along with some of his most trusted men. He looked serious, and when their eyes met across the camp, Daniel immediately regretted it. The chief pointed at him and then at his tent.

Daniel gulped. *This can't be good.*

When he entered the chief's tent, it smelled of heavy incense and fresh face paint. Black Fish rolled up his maps and tucked them away. "Sheltowee," the chief said. It was Daniel's Indian name, which meant "Big Turtle." He'd proven himself enough to earn the Shawnee's respect, but not their trust. He was part of their "family," but he would never belong.

"I need you to feed an army," Black Fish said. He was watching him closely, and Daniel felt like it was a test.

"Of course," he replied in the chief's native tongue. "I'll bring your warriors a feast. I'll set out to hunt at dawn tomorrow."

"You know the rules. You can't go alone," Black Fish said.

Daniel nodded. Satisfied, the chief dismissed him. Outside the tent, Daniel breathed a sigh of relief. Getting the chief's permission to hunt would help him escape, but that was the easy part. The hard part was figuring out how to get away without being noticed.

The next morning, just before dawn, Daniel set out with nothing but the clothes on his back and a gun. He waited for an opening to sneak past the scouts. It was now or never. He could either accept the situation he'd been dealt or risk everything to save his family and friends' lives on the frontier.

Scanning the treeline once more, he made his choice. He broke into a run and didn't look back.

Daniel had spent plenty of time living true to his Indian name... slow and patient as a turtle. Now, it was time to race as fast as his legs would carry him home to his real family.

A FIELD GUIDE TO

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# APPALACHIAN

## WEAPONRY & TECHNOLOGY



### LONG RIFLE

A flintlock firearm famous for accuracy and range. In the days of Boone, these weapons were essential for both hunting and defense. Boone's version stretched 5 feet and weighed nearly 11 pounds.



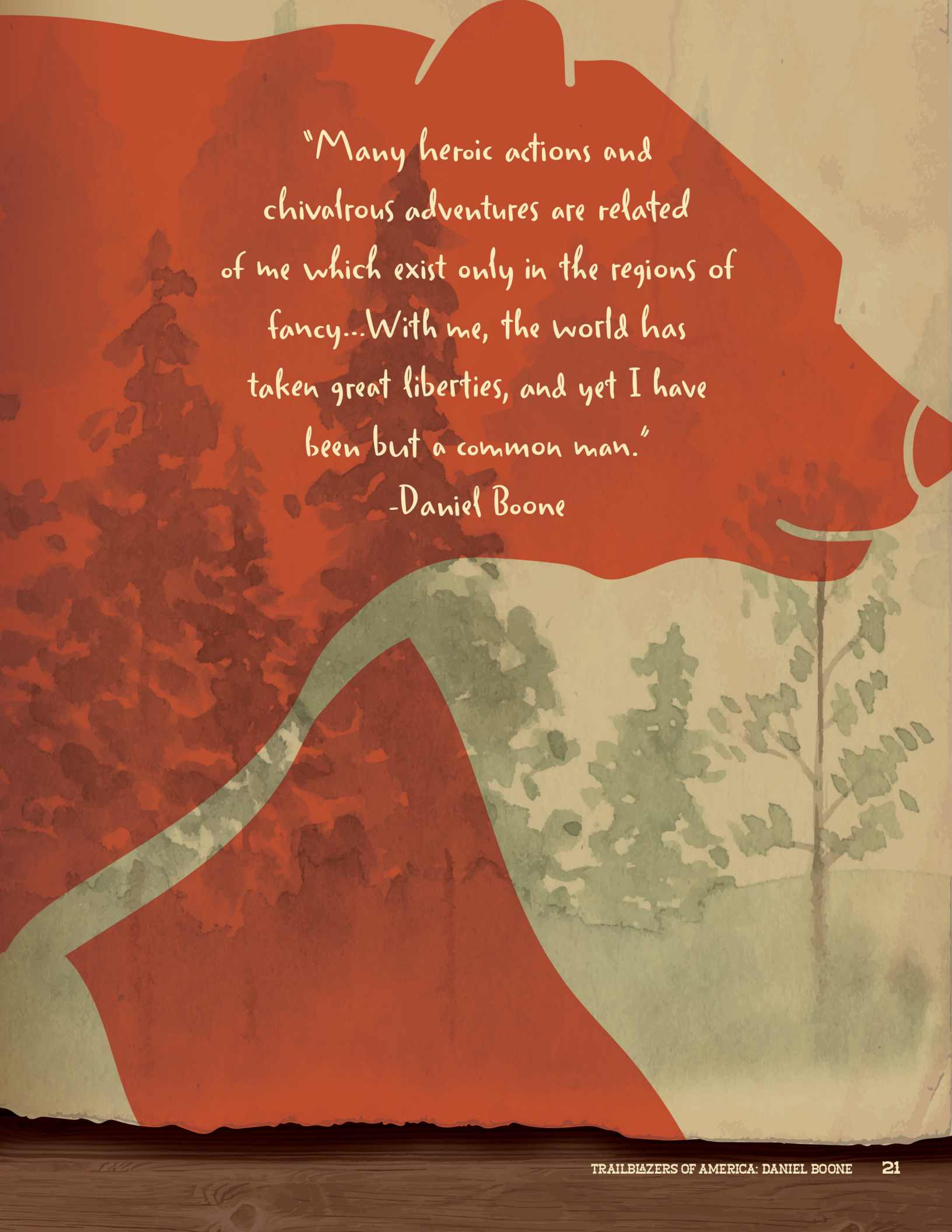
### SHAWNEE TOMAHAWK

These versatile weapons were used by both Indians and explorers and were useful in war or while hunting. The Shawnee version was especially effective in hand-to-hand combat, and today is the most popular version of tomahawks used in throwing competitions.



### POWDER HORN

A container for gunpowder, generally made from cow, ox, or buffalo horn. Boone used these to load his rifle and pistols.



"Many heroic actions and chivalrous adventures are related of me which exist only in the regions of fancy...With me, the world has taken great liberties, and yet I have been but a common man."

-Daniel Boone

# A Siege on the Settlement

Daniel successfully escaped the Shawnees, and the brave frontiersman covered over 160 miles in four days, eating and drinking little along the way. It was a feat of incredible endurance.

He arrived back at Boonesborough, to the surprise of the remaining settlers. However, surprise and joy quickly turned to urgency as he warned them of a coming attack.

Preparations began in earnest to protect the fort. Supplies were gathered, gunpowder was made, and reinforcements were applied to the walls. As the summer went on, though, and no Indian attack came, the settlers went back to normal life.



Daniel knew better, though. He continued to watch and scout. Things were too quiet... until, finally, he tracked a large movement of Indians into their area. Racing back to the fort from his scouting mission, he warned the settlers to make the final preparations.

The Indian forces made no effort to hide their arrival and made camp around the settlement. The Shawnee greatly outnumbered the settlers, 400 strong to 60 fighting men inside the fort. Black Fish presented Daniel with a note from the British detailing the terms of surrender. Since Daniel had earlier promised the surrender of the fort, Black Fish hoped for an easy win. Daniel weighed the options with the settlers, but they were determined to fight it out. Some were even suspicious of Daniel's openness to surrender, wondering if he had betrayed them to the British.

The settlers agreed to negotiations for a truce, but only to buy more time since they expected reinforcements to arrive from nearby Virginia. However, on the last day of negotiations, as the two sides were ready to shake on the agreement, a scuffle broke out. Shots were fired on both sides and on September 7, 1778, the **siege** on Boonesborough began.

Though records vary, the siege lasted eleven or twelve days. The settlers ran low on food and water, and they regretted not finishing the well they had started building in the summer. They suffered from lack of sleep and constant fear as they defended against every attack. Meanwhile, the Indians tried everything they could, from firing flaming arrows to digging a tunnel to burrow under the fort. However, with the recent rains, most fires didn't take hold, and the tunnel collapsed from the wet dirt.

The Indians finally retreated, and the settlers could open their gates once more. Their perseverance and unyielding attitude won out. Reinforcements arrived too late, but they were able to help the settlers clean up the aftermath. It was a significant win on the frontier, and some historians believe that had Fort Boonesborough fallen, all the other early settlements in Kentucky might have fallen, too.

# Boone's Final Frontier

After the siege, Daniel was **court-martialed** for treason. Despite all his efforts to protect and defend the fort, settlers didn't trust his relationship with the Native Americans. Between his living with the Shawnee for months and his **leniency** toward negotiating with them before the siege, many thought he was a traitor. All claims were dismissed, however, and Daniel went to North Carolina to reunite with his family and bring them back to Kentucky once more. He'd promised them a better life, and with Boonesborough secured, Daniel was determined to seize opportunity again on the frontier.

Daniel pursued many business ventures in Kentucky. He settled a new community called **Boone's Station** and spent his time hunting, **surveying** land, and even running a tavern for a time. As it turned out, Daniel was a much better hunter than businessman. He lost most of his land claims and went into significant debt.

The nation saw a major turning point in 1783, with their victory in the American Revolution against the British. With their independence secured, settlers flooded to the West, and Kentucky became much too crowded for Daniel's liking. In 1799, he, his family, and some friends decided to move south to Missouri, which was outside the United States at the time. The area was controlled by the Spanish, but it wasn't very populated. Daniel was able to get a land claim for 850 acres.

Unfortunately, when Missouri was purchased by the U.S. in the early 1800s, Daniel lost his claim to the land.

"Curiosity is natural to the soul of man and interesting objects have a powerful influence on our affections."

—Daniel Boone

Daniel spent his latter days living with one of his sons, Nathan. He continued hunting as much as his health allowed and enjoyed time with his children and grandchildren. Known for his peaceful attitude and respect toward the Indians, he even helped settle disputes between the Natives and settlers in the area. Despite not achieving much in the way of financial success, in the end, he held onto what truly mattered: his family. As long as they were together and there was land to hunt on, he was content. After 56 years of marriage, his wife Rebecca died in 1813. Daniel himself lived to be 85 years old—quite an achievement in his day. He passed the threshold into his final frontier in September 1820. At the end of his long journey, he was laid to rest and buried with Rebecca.





**8** From 1799 until his death in 1820, lived in, and explored the lands of Missouri.

**6** Kidnapped by Shawnee Indians on February 7, 1778 and taken as a prisoner to their lands in the Ohio Territory.

**5** The settlement of Boonesborough was established on September 8, 1775.

**4** From 1767 to 1775 explored the lands around the Cumberland Gap and led a team clearing the Wilderness Road.

2

Participated in the French and Indian War on July 9, 1775 at the Battle of the Monongahela.

1

Born November 2, 1734 in the Oley River Valley of the British American colony Pennsylvania.

7

Fought the British during the American Revolutionary War at the Battle of Blue Licks on August 19, 1782.

3

Married Rebecca Bryan in the Yadkin Valley of North Carolina on August 14, 1756.

# DANIEL BOONE'S ADVENTURES

1734-1820

# Frontiersman to Folk Hero

*Fort Boonesborough, early 1780s.*

"Mr. Boone? I asked you a question."

Daniel blinked. The man sitting across from him had stopped writing. He wasn't sure why he agreed to this interview—he certainly felt that John Filson was writing an awful lot down even though he hadn't said much.

"I'm sorry, what was your question?" Daniel asked.

"I asked if you're satisfied with how Boonesborough turned out. After all, Mr. Henderson assigned you a great undertaking when you first set out."

The knock on his door seemed a lifetime ago. So much had happened since he set out for Kentucky with all those men. Rebecca's words came rushing back. *I know you will never be satisfied until you explore every nook and cranny of those wild lands.*

Daniel smiled. "Am I satisfied? We shall see. My curiosities and explorations are far from over."

"That's good, that's good..." Filson was writing quickly.

"And are you satisfied, Mr. Filson, with the answers I've given?" Daniel replied. "I'm afraid I don't see how you can write very much about an ordinary man such as myself."

Filson paused. "Don't sell yourself short, Mr. Boone. Many of our greatest heroes also began as quite ordinary men."



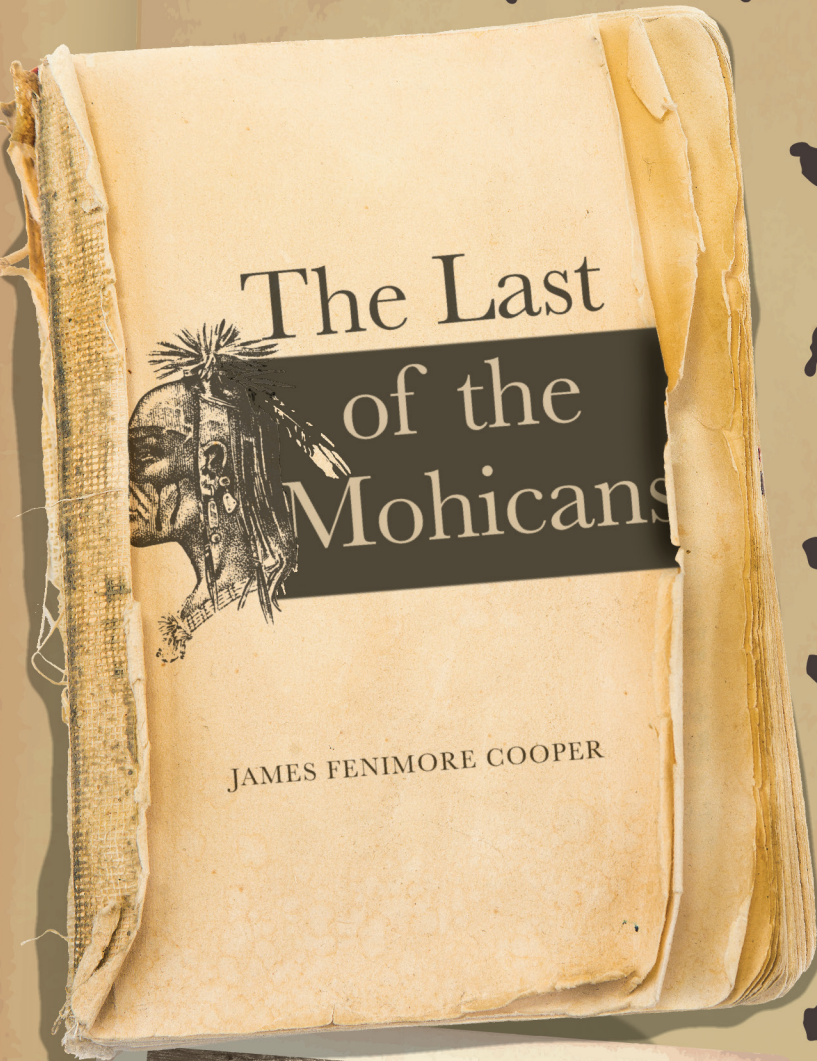
These stories were later published by John Filson in “The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boon[e].” Though much of what Daniel shared was embellished and made to be larger than life, they were based on real conversations Boone had with Filson. Whether truth or fiction, the tales made Daniel famous in his lifetime.

From frontiersman to one of history’s favorite folk heroes, Daniel Boone made his own path in life. The American frontier was a tough place that offered a difficult life, but where others saw obstacles and danger, Daniel saw beauty and a land of promise.

In true American spirit, he didn’t settle for the life he was dealt but fought for the life he believed his family, and countless other settlers, were destined to have. He accepted the call to adventure, with all its perils, not for man or money, but for something of much greater value: freedom.



# Interesting Facts




- Though legend has it that Daniel Boone often wore a raccoon hat, he actually preferred a beaver hat.
- In classic literature, *The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper is said to include a fictionalized version of Boone's rescue of his daughter Jemima from her kidnappers.
- Boone was able to see Kentucky become a state within his lifetime, on June 1, 1792.
- Boone's primary weapon for hunting was a Pennsylvania (or Kentucky) Long Rifle. He famously named his "Old Tick Licker." The name implied that he could shoot a tick off an animal without causing it any harm, which added to frontier lore about his hunting skills.
- Boone and his wife Rebecca had 10 children and 68 grandchildren. During their time, America's birth rate was one of the highest ever recorded in any country, with the average woman having at least seven children.





# Glossary



**Appalachian Mountains:** The largest mountain range in the eastern United States. It spans from Canada down to central Alabama, almost 2,000 miles. It was a historic barrier to westward expansion during colonial times.

**Boone's Station:** A second settlement established by Daniel Boone in Kentucky during the winter of 1779-1780.

**Court-Martial:** A court that tries military members for breaking military law.

**Cumberland Gap:** A natural pass in the Cumberland Mountains, within the Appalachian Mountain range. It's near the intersection of the borders of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia.

**Forage:** To search for food or supplies in the wild.

**Fort Boonesborough:** One of the earliest colonial settlements in Kentucky. It was founded by and named for Daniel Boone.

**French and Indian War:** The North American portion of the global Seven Years' War, fought from 1754-1763. The British colonies defeated the French and gained lands, including those between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River.

**Frontier:** Untamed wilderness beyond settled land.

**"Ken-te-ke":** A possible origin for the name of the area now known as Kentucky. Several theories exist, including Ken-te-ke or Kain Tuck, meaning "meadowland" or "at the head of the river." Another claim is that it stems from the Native American word meaning "land of tomorrow."

**Lenient:** Not being as strict or severe as expected. Showing tolerance or mercy toward someone.

**Livelihood:** How someone makes a living. This often refers to the job or means by which a person makes money to buy their daily necessities.

**Proclamation Line of 1763:** A British produced boundary, marked in the Appalachian Mountains, that prohibited Anglo-American colonists from settling on lands westward.

**Salt Lick:** A place where salt naturally gathers, and animals go there to lick the salt and get the minerals they need.

**Siege:** A military attack method in which an armed force tries to take over a fortified city or town. The main tactic of a siege is cutting off the supplies to the city or town in the hopes of forcing those inside to surrender.

**Survey:** To map or measure out land for the purpose of selling it to private owners from the state or crown.

**Transylvania Company:** A land company owned by Richard Henderson, with the goal of purchasing land in the areas of Ohio, Kentucky, and the Cumberland Rivers. Henderson used this company to purchase land from the Cherokee Indians, which Daniel Boone was then hired to settle.

**Wilderness Road:** A path Daniel Boone helped create which allowed people to travel through the Appalachian Mountains to reach Kentucky.

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