

Great American Lives

of Nineteenth Century Missouri

Daniel Boone

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Mention the name Daniel Boone and people tend to think of the **myth** rather than the man. But the real Daniel Boone was more human than legendary, although his adventures as a **frontiersman** make him an interesting person to study.

Born on Oct. 22, 1734, in Berks County, Pa., Daniel Boone was the son of Squire Boone, an English **immigrant**, and Sarah Morgan, an American-born woman of Welsh Quaker background.

Boone grew up on a farm and quickly developed a love of nature. When he was 12, his father bought him a gun and he became an excellent **marksman**. During these early years, Boone often neglected his farm chores to roam the woods and hunt instead.

When Boone was in his teens, his family moved to the wilds of western North Carolina on the Yadkin River. In 1756, he married Rebecca Bryan, a neighbor he had been **courting**.

The couple had 10 children, but Rebecca Boone spent much of her marriage alone, raising children and taking care of the home while her husband hunted, explored, and surveyed land.

FICTION OR FACT?

A combination of fiction and fact has created the legend of Daniel Boone in the American mind. The fiction is that Boone settled the vast territory of the West single-handedly, constantly fought Indians and lived as a simple frontiersman all his life. But here are the facts:

- Boone paved the way for settlement in Kentucky, but it took thousands of people over the span of many decades to settle the West.
- Boone did fight Indians when he or his family was threatened, but most of the time he got along well with them.
- Boone really was an excellent hunter and killed many hundreds of bears and deers to

sell their hides.

- Boone was also a **surveyor** who divided land for settlement. He was very ambitious and spent much of his life acquiring land for himself.

BLAZING TRAILS

Boone was a wanderer who could not stay put for long. He once said it was time to move when he could “no longer brush his cabin with the laps of falling trees.”

In 1769, Boone and five men left to explore and hunt in the area known today as Kentucky. They were captured by Shawnee Indians but managed to escape. In 1773, Boone, his family and a group of friends attempted to settle in Kentucky but were attacked by Indians at Cumberland Gap, a pass through the Cumberland Mountains between present day Virginia and Kentucky. During the attack, Boone’s first son, James, was killed.

Despite losing his son, Boone **persisted** in his attempts to settle in Kentucky. In 1775, he pushed into Kentucky again, this time cutting the Wilderness Road and founding Boonesborough, the primitive beginning of Kentucky.

THE FINAL YEARS

Besides hunting and exploring, Boone stayed busy with other pursuits. He served in the Virginia legislature, ran a tavern, worked as a surveyor and was a **land speculator**. But his financial affairs were a disaster.

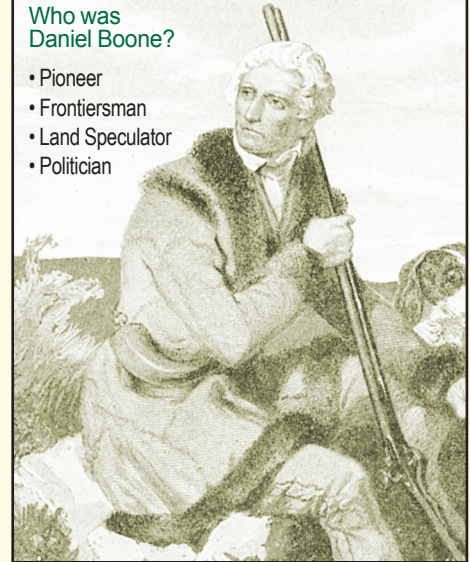
Boone lost thousands of acres of land he acquired in Kentucky through defective titles, and he saw his farming and business ventures fail. Heavily in **debt**, he was forced out of Kentucky, resettling at Point Pleasant on the Ohio River in what is now West Virginia.

By the late 1790s, Boone was a poor and bitter man when he and his family were invited by the



Who was Daniel Boone?

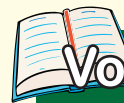
- Pioneer
- Frontiersman
- Land Speculator
- Politician



Spanish government to resettle in Missouri Territory. Thinking the famous frontiersman would attract other settlers, the Spanish government gave Boone a **generous** grant of land near present day St. Charles. Sure enough, people flooded into the area! In 1803, the Missouri Territory became a part of the United States with the Louisiana Purchase.

By the time Boone died on September 26, 1820, he had a permanent place in history as a pioneer and frontiersman.

His sons, particularly Nathan Boone, became important figures in the settlement of Missouri.



Vocabulary

Match the vocabulary word with the correct definition, then write a sentence using each word.

___ Debt

___ Court

___ Marksman

___ Generous

___ Land

___ Speculator

___ Frontiersman

___ Immigrant

___ Myth

___ Surveyor

___ Persist

A – Fable or legend, something having no existence in fact

B – A person who lived on the frontier

C – A person who moves from his native country to establish permanent residence in another country

D – A person who shoots well or is skillful at hitting a mark

E – To seek the affection or love of another, to solicit for marriage

F – Money owed

G – A person paid to determine the boundaries of land

H – A person who buys land with the hopes of selling for profit at an opportune time

I – To continue to try

J – Large, ample or bountiful portion