

Annals of the Oley Valley

IN BERKS COUNTY, PA.

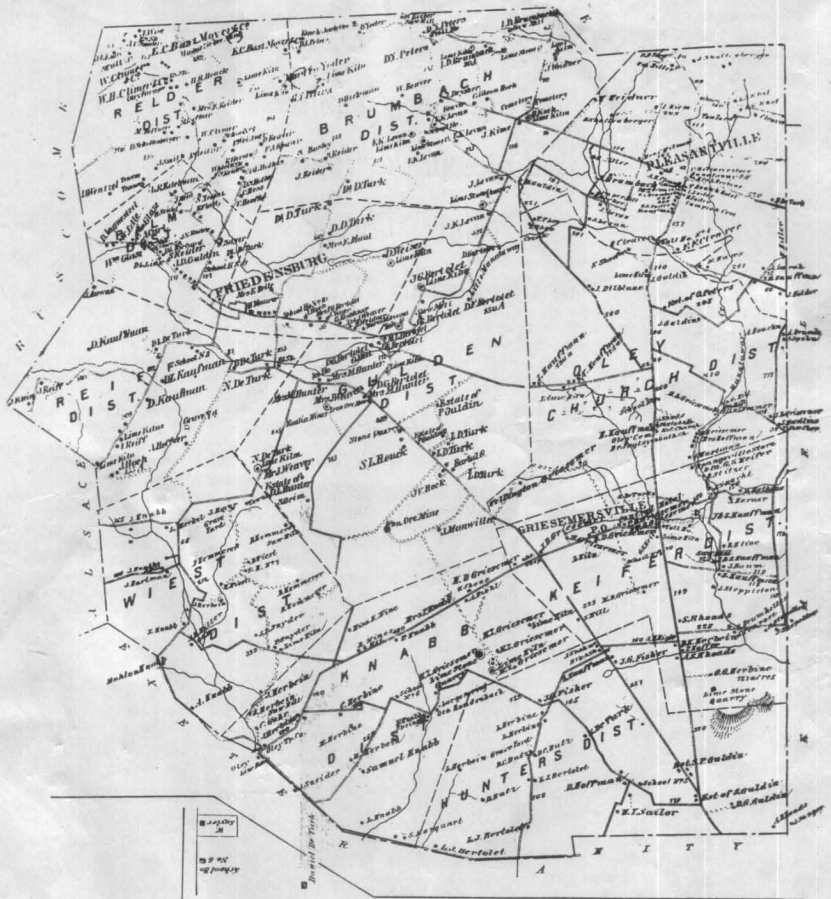
Over Two Hundred Years
of Local History of An
American Canaan

By

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or

Womelsdorf, Pa.



The Oley Valley

Chapter IV.

THE BOONE FAMILY

Early Berks Quakers and Pioneers in Several States

Among the early settlers of Oley we find George Boone and family. According to geneological records preserved, there was quite a line of George Boones, natives of Devonshire, Eng. The Oley immigrant is George Boone, 3d, born 1666; but as we now begin the story of the American Boones we shall call him George, 1st. He, too, had a son George, whom we shall know as George, 2d.

According to Mrs. Hazel Atterbury Spraker's excellent and voluminous book on "The Boone Family," the first Oley Boone—our George, 1st—married Mary Maugridge, of Brandwich, Eng., eight miles from Exeter in Devonshire, some 20 years before their emigration to America. Both had been members of the Society of Friends in England and brought letters of recommendation with them to Pennsylvania. They probably knew William Penn in their native land, and he may have induced them, and their children before them, to venture on life in his virgin colony in America. At all events, their three oldest children, George, Sarah and Squire Boone, preceded them by four years in exploring and investigating conditions in this new colony of Penn. We find the eldest son was married soon after their arrival, leading to the nuptial altar on May 27, 1713, Miss Deborah Howell, of Haversford, Chester county, whom he had probably known and loved in England.

A HAPPY MEETING.

The reports from their children of conditions and opportunities in "Penn's Woods," doubtless helped their parents to decide on moving hither also. So they followed them in 1717, bringing their other three children with them and landing at Philadelphia on Aug. 17, of that year. We can imagine a happy meeting when the vessel reached port, or at least soon thereafter, when the family was reunited. And

what reports of this new country the three children must have poured into the ears of the new arrivals!

The family probably remained a while with their children and other acquaintances in Abington, where their offspring seemed to have at first settled. The elder Boone then moved with his family to North Wales, where they stayed about two years, when they moved to Oley and here built a permanent home on land that George Boone, 1st, had purchased.

A HISTORIC LANDMARK.

The fireplace of this George Boone log house, erected in 1720, in the northeastern section of what is now Exeter township, is still standing, and the Historical Society has recently had it securely bound with cement-mortar for its preservation as a historic landmark, hoping eventually to build about it again a log cabin after the original model (a photo of which is in hand) and to carefully mark it with a stone-marker, holding an inscribed historic legend.

When the immigrant Boones moved into this humble pioneer dwelling they took with them six younger children who were reared here. They were the parents, therefore, of nine children.

The first documentary allusion to this Boone dwelling that we know of is found in a petition to the authorities of Philadelphia or Chester county for a new road from the Tulpehocken to Oley, drawn in 1727. It is a quaint and typical Colonial document and reads as follows:

September, 1727.

To the Honorable Bench:

We, whose names are herewith inscribed, ye inhabitants of ye Northwest part of ye Township of Oley, Tolpehocken and parts adjacent. Having no Road as yet established amongst us by means whereof we suffer diver inconveniences and a great part of ye land

at present not settled, through which ye hereby petitioned road is naturally designated to go by of whereof there will be no opposition made in ye laying it out.

Wherefore, we your Petitioners, humbly request that you will be pleased to order a Highroad to be laid out. Beginning at the Lutheran Meeting House at Tulpehocken, to end in the high road at ye Quaker Meeting House, near George Boone's Mill, in Oley.

And your petitioners shall ever pray.

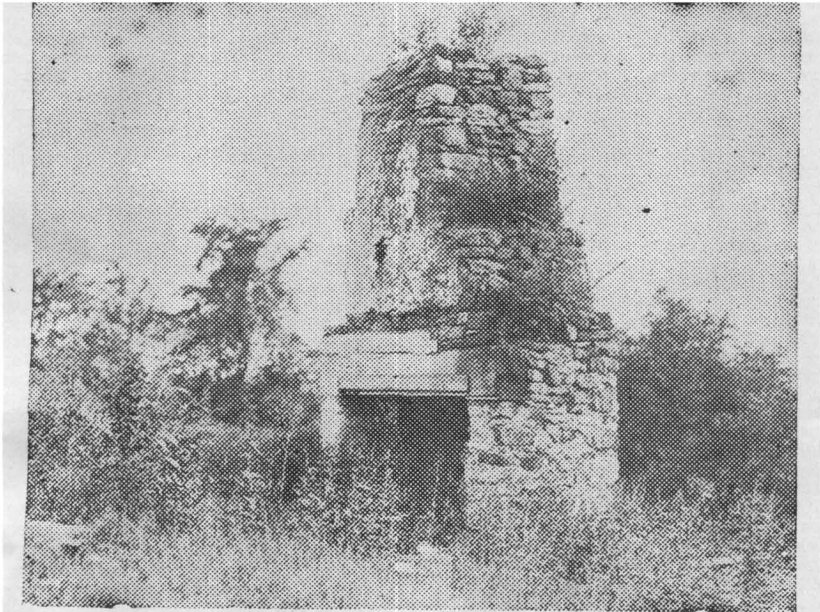
36 PETITIONERS.

To this document are attached 36 names as petitioners, most of whom were those of persons resident in the Tulpehocken region. Only eight show they were settlers of the Oley end

as the Oley settlements; that in 1727 there was already a Friends' Meeting House in these parts and located near George Boone's; that George Boone was a miller or owned a mill; that one of his son's name was Benjamin, and that the Tulpehocken settlers knew their way out to world intercourse lay southward, and by public highway towards Philadelphia, and not northward, by the water course of the Susquehanna to New York colony, whence they had come.

A LARGER DWELLING.

While the Boone family was reared in this pioneer log house of 1720, we know that in 1733 the



Fireplace only reminder left where George Boone homestead once stood.

of the line of this proposed road, viz., Benjamin Boone, Isaac Wiseman, John Collins, Joseph Baker, Jonathan Baker, Hugh Edwards, William Roberts and Peter Hilton. It was before Mordecai Lincoln had settled in these parts or we should doubtless find his name attached, as we know him to have been quite active in neighborhood improvement measures.

The petition reveals a number of things: That at this time the country had been opened up with highways from Philadelphia only as far

father erected nearby a larger stone dwelling. This is usually referred to in our day when one speaks of the old Boone house. There is a stone marker at the roadway, set up by the Historical Society of Berks County, indicating it as such.

This marker bears this inscription:

House built in 1733 by
GEORGE BOONE, Grandfather of
DANIEL BOONE.

Site of George Boone's log house,
built about 1720.

Historical Society of Berks.

OWNED LARGE TRACTS OF LAND.

It is said that Father Boone never lived in this new house himself, declaring it was too grand for one of his simple tastes. It was therefore occupied by his eldest son, George Boone, the second, who by this time had moved with his family to Oley from Abington. When the elder Boone died in 1744 his body was carried from the log cabin to this new house and from there to his burial at the Exeter Meeting burial grounds, adjoining the Meeting House.

By this time Boone and his sons had bought up large tracts of land in this neighborhood, and all the family had settled down. They likely prospered, for there is a tradition that before the Revolutionary War a bold robbery was committed at this stone Boone house, which would lead to the inference that the occupants were well to do and had valuables stored away here. It does give reliable proof that not all dwellers of the Oley Valley of that day were saints.

This Oley section filling up with Quaker settlers, early became a separate organization for religious meeting and called for such recognition from the Gwynedd meeting of then Bucks county, to which they had formerly belonged. George Boone's membership in this Friends organization is made plain by the following extracts from the Friends' records:

10-31-1717 (Dec. 31) George Boone, sr., produced a Certificate of his good life and conversation from the Monthly Meeting at Calumpton in Great Britain, which was read and was well received. In 1720 George Boone was called to account for allowing the courtship between his daughter Mary and John Webb. He acknowledged his fault thus:

5-6-1720. George Boone has openly acknowledged in the meeting his forwardness in giving his consent to John Webb to keep company with his daughter in order to marry, contrary to ye established order amongst us.

Gwynedd Meeting records in 1736 that Oley Friends had appointed George Boone one of two in the community to make a canvass of the families in the neighborhood of his Oley home. This was doubtless to secure the funds to build their second meeting house, which we know was erected in 1737.

RECORDED IN OLD BIBLE.

An old family Bible records the fact that "when grandfather died he left eight children, 52 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren living, in all 70, being as many persons as the house of Jacob, which came to Egypt."

As no stones mark the graves of those interred in this Oley (now Exeter) meeting burial grounds we cannot positively say, but probably within this enclosure went to dust most of the family of Boones, above enumerated. We know, however, that some did not for this recorded list embrace Daniel Boone, the rover, and his father's family who later moved to North Carolina.

The following register embraces the entire family of George Boone the first:

1. George Boone, b. 13 July, 1690.
2. Sarah Boone, b. 18 Feb. 1691 (O. S.) Feb. 29, 1792 (N. S.)
Married Jacob Stover (Stuber, Stowber) (settled first in this locality and died probably before 1744. She very likely left the Quakers and affiliated with the Moravians.)
3. Squire Boone, b. 25 November, 1693.
4. Mary Boone, b. 23 September, 1699.
5. John Boone, b. 3 January, 1701.
(He never was married. Was a school teacher. Kept records of family births, etc., died in 84th year.)
6. Joseph Boone, b. 5 April, 1704.
(Married Catharine ———; died Jan. 30, 1776.)
7. Benjamin Boone, b. 16 July, 1706.
8. John Boone, b. 7 July, 1709.
He had following children:
Judah,
Moses,
James,
Joshua,
Martin, m. George Hughes.
Rachel, m. William Wilcoxson.
Annie, m. Abraham Lincoln.
Mary, m. Thomas Lee.
9. Samuel Boone, b. about 1711.

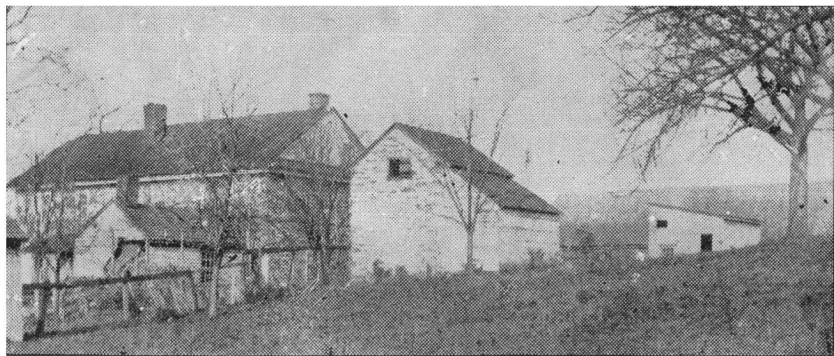
FROM STATE ARCHIVES.

We copy from the Pennsylvania Archives, Second Series, Vol. 19, pp. 583 and 644, respectively, the following, throwing light on Stover and Boone settlements in Oley:

Signed a patent to Jacob Stauber for 510 a's (acres) at Oley Creek (Manatawny?) dated the 9th, 4 mo., 1714 a land grant to him, made for £60."

Agreed with George Boon of Gwyned, Ser'r, for his Son George, for 400 a's of Land at Oley, for £14 p. c't and one shill. ster. quitr't ye warr't dated ye 20th Xber, 1718.

George Boone's third child was Squire Boone, who, according to the above register, was born Nov. 25, 1693, in Devonshire, England. He became the father of a family of nine children, of whom Daniel, the Kentucky pioneer, was the sixth. Squire Boone was married on Sept.



Site of Daniel Boone's Birth.

23, 1720, in Oley, to Sarah Morgan, daughter of Edward Morgan, an early settler in the Welsh colony of Gwynedd, in Bucks county. He lived in Oley, near his father's homestead, from 1720 to 1750, reared his home here (originally a small log house), where most of his children, Daniel included, were born. In 1739 he was a trustee of the Oley Meeting. On Oct. 22, 1733, Daniel, the sixth child of Squire and Sarah Morgan Boone, was born in the log house. This house was later replaced by a larger dwelling, built upon the foundation of the log cabin, which had been erected over a spring for safety as a place of refuge, or protection against Indian attacks, and this is still standing as the birthplace of Daniel Boone. It is the site but not the house of Daniel Boone's birth. Yet it should for these associations be preserved against ruin as a hallowed historic landmark.

THEIR ROVING SPIRIT.

In 1750 the roving spirit was dominant in these Eastern Pennsylvania settlements. But this wanderlust was southward then, as it became westward several generations later, when Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and the farther West lured our eastern people to follow the setting sun and find new and cheaper homes on the prairies and the Eldoradoes of and beyond the Rocky Mountains. This wanderlust seized Squire Boone, and in 1750 he sold his farm in Oley to William Maugridge and trekked with his family to Rowan county, N. C., where on Jan. 2, 1765, he died and was buried in the Joppa Cemetery, of Mocksville, N. C., the following inscribed headstone marking his final resting place:

SQUIRE BOONE

Departed
this life on
they sixty-
ninth year
of his age, in
they year
of our Lord
1765 Gene-
ary tha 2.

In a voluminous history of Rockingham county, Virginia, by John W. Wayland, Ph. D., p. 428 occurs this paragraph:

"In the spring of 1750 when Daniel Boone was 15 or 16 years of age, his parents left Pennsylvania for North Carolina. It was the autumn of 1751, a year and a half later, before they reached their destination. Tradition says they tarried for a year or more in what is now Rockingham county, Va., on Linville

Creek, six miles north of Harrisonburg. It is understood that the Boones and Lincolns were acquaintances in Pennsylvania. If the Lincolns had already come to Virginia, the Boones were doubtless their guests on Linville Creek; if the Lincolns followed they may have been directed to Linville Creek by the Boones."

The Lincolns, that is, John Lincoln and family, of Berks, settled permanently on Linville Creek. The Lincoln homes and graveyard are nearby.

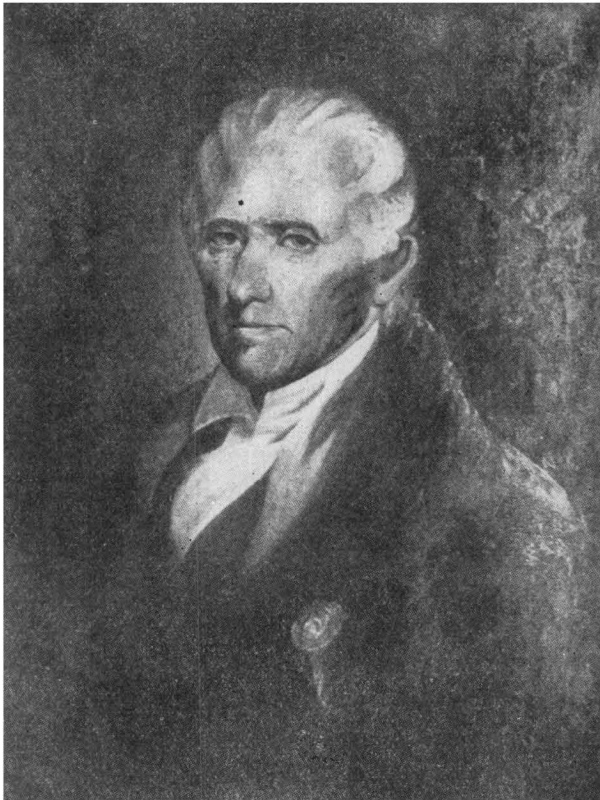
DESCENDANTS IN MANY STATES

In September, 1741, Exeter township was organized out of Oley and Amity and there is little doubt but that the Boones, father and children, had much to do with the naming of it after the section from whence they emigrated to America. It cut their lands and houses and meeting house into the new township and so they have all come to be known as in Exeter, instead of the Oley Region. From this region have gone out the Boones to the south, west and northwest until now their descendants can be traced to almost every State from Pennsylvania and North Carolina to Missouri and Kansas and even beyond. The authoress of the most exhaustive study and voluminous book on the history of the Boone family already alluded to, resides in Buffalo, N. Y. One of the chief contributors to the story of the Squire Boone branch of the family to which branch he belongs, is Jesse P. Crump, of Kansas City, Mo. We refer further students of the family to this voluminous work by Mrs. Spraker.

There is little doubt but that around Daniel, the Kentucky explorer and pioneer, has revolved more romance and historic interest than about any other Boone. From childhood, when the writer saw in old school readers, or perhaps an almanac, the rude cabin of Daniel Boone's birth and a reprint of his jack knife carving of his name on a tree on his father's farm, and the further announcement in this connection that

D. BOONE.
Cilled a
Bar hear

he has been interested in his adventures and has followed his biographers with fascination. He is glad for the absolute proof that shows most of his earlier biographers mis-



Daniel Boone

(Courtesy of the "Independent," Boston, Mass. From "Kit Carson Days," published by A. C. McClurg & Co.)

taken, however, in placing his birth in Bucks, instead of Berks county. And now that this place has been definitely settled, efforts should be made by the citizens of Oley and Exeter, by the scattered relatives in many States and by the Historical Society of Berks to preserve this Boone homestead of Exeter as a historic shrine.

HIS CAREER BRIEFLY STATED.

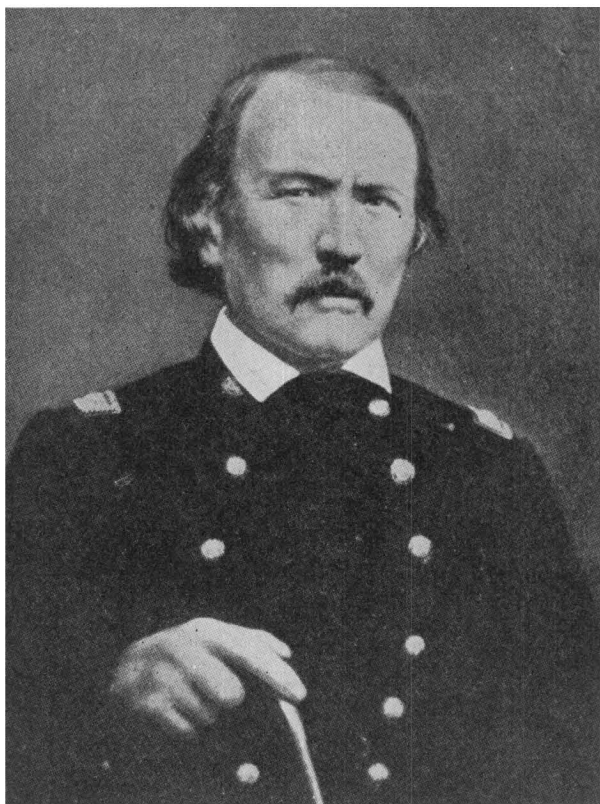
Daniel Boone's eventful life is too full of incident to be even but barely outlined in this brief sketch. As this is contained in many previous volumes, this is not necessary here. It is sufficient to mention that in due time he married a woman of North Carolina by the name of Rebecca Bryan and that they reared

a family of children, who in turn married into families by the name of Mays, and Scholl, and Broughton and Cramp, etc., etc.

It is known that twice after his departure from Berks county Daniel Boone returned to the place of his birth, once in October, 1781, and again in February, 1788, after his fame as a bold and successful pioneer had been heralded abroad. He was accompanied here by his wife and son, Nathan, and a great deal of ado was made over him and his achievements by his oldtime neighbors of Berks.

HIS GROWING FAME.

The last years of Daniel Boone's life were lived in Missouri. Here he was visited by Audubon, the natural-



Kit Carson, Grandson of Daniel Boone

(Courtesy of the "Independent," Boston, Mass. From "Kit Carson Days," published by A. C. McClurg & Co.)

ist, when he (Boone) was nearly 70 years of age. The great botanist was profoundly impressed with this pioneer's great physical strength and uprightness of character. He has left us this word-picture of the man:

"The stature and general appearance of this wanderer of the western forests approached the gigantic. His chest was broad and prominent; his muscular powers displayed themselves in every limb; his countenance gave indication of great courage, enterprise and perseverance; and when he spoke the very motion of his lips brought the impression that whatever he uttered could not be otherwise than strictly true."

On Sept. 26, 1820, he died at the age of nearly 87 years. He was buried near his last home at Charette Village, Mo. His remains were later (1845) removed to Kentucky and reinterred at Frankfort, that State. The fame as a hunter, pioneer and Indian fighter of this son of Berks, son of Oley, son of Exeter, son of a consistent Quaker, has been growing with the years.

It may not be generally known that Kit Carson, the famous western scout and explorer, was a grandson of Daniel Boone, so carrying explorations and blood farther on. Boone led the way across the Appalachians, Crockett across the Mississippi to Texas, and Carson across the Rockies.