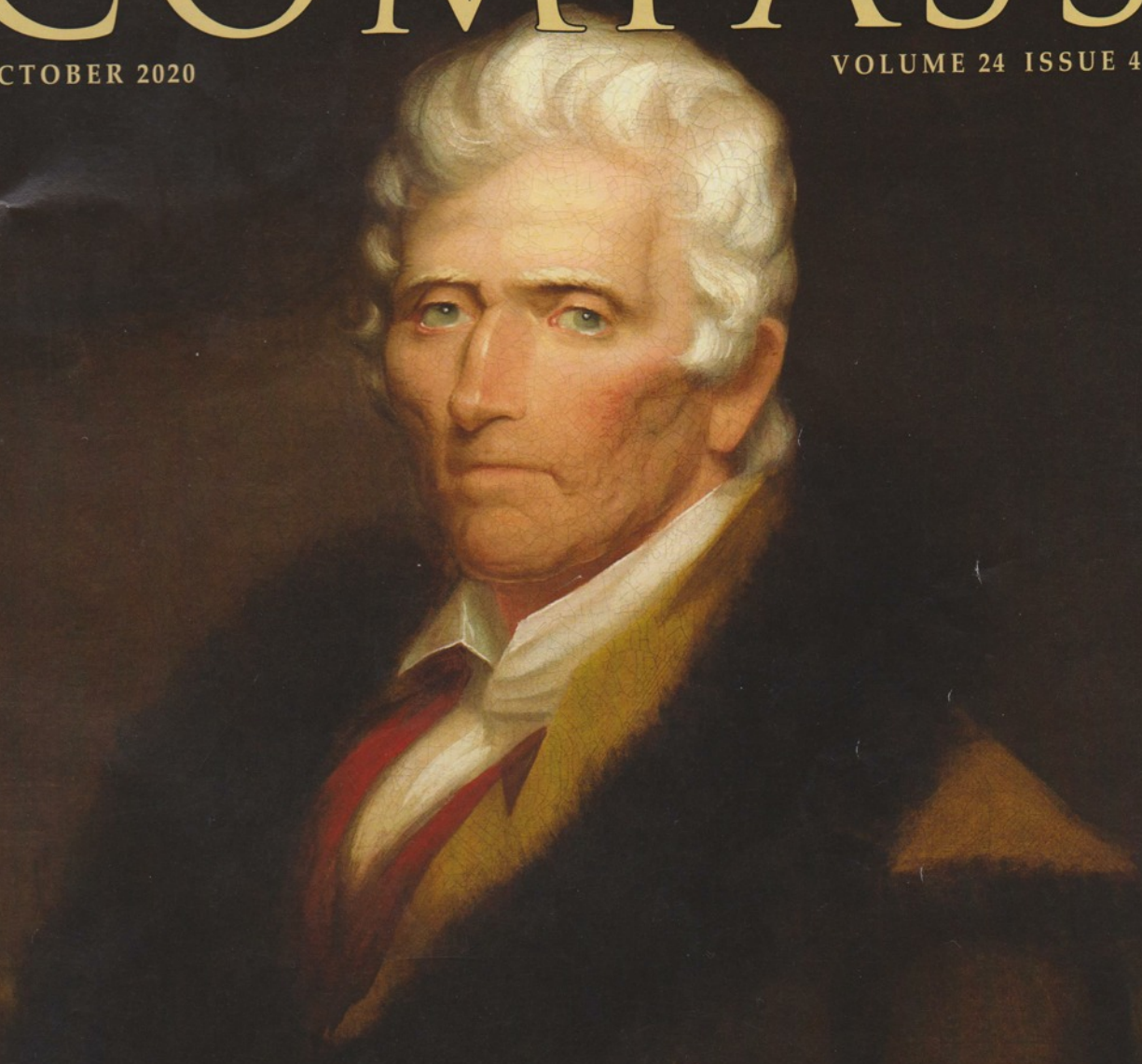


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Daniel Boone

FIRST HERO OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER



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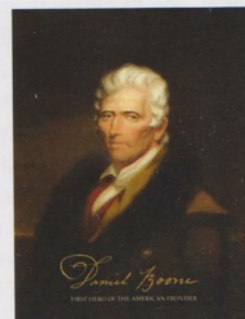
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CONTENTS

- 4 **200th Anniversary of DANIEL BOONE'S DEATH**
~Reprint from Neal Hammon's Book
~Submitted by Sam Compton
- 6 **OBITUARY OF DANIEL BOONE**
~Submitted by Sam Compton
- 7 **A REQUEST FROM JANET BOONE McGARRIGLE**
~ Janet Boone McGarrigle
- 8 **A TALE OF THE WITCH TREE**
~ Mark Sage
- 14 **PILOT KNOB: "THE BEAUTIFUL LEVEL OF KENTUCKY"**
~ Helen McKinney
- 19 **18TH CENTURY RECIPES**
~Courtesy of Karen Hammond
- 20 **MAJOR GENERAL J. FRANKLIN BELL (1856-1919): SHELBY COUNTY KENTUCKY'S FORGOTTEN HERO**
~ Brigadier General Ronald R. Van Stockum
- 22 **THOMAS HELM GRAVE MARKING**
~ Joyce Miller
- 24 **BOOK REVIEW OF RUSSELL LUNDSFORD'S DANIEL BOONE'S KENTUCKY**
~ Mary Popham
- 25 **1792 MAP OF KENTUCKY**
- 26 **SPONSORSHIP LIST**
- 27 **NEW MEMBERS LIST**

ON THE COVER

Daniel Boone portrait by Chester Harking in 1820, prepared for our cover by H. David Wright. The painting is property of the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute.



OCTOBER 2020 COMPASS

A BOOK REVIEW OF RUSSELL LUNSFORD'S *DANIEL BOONE'S KENTUCKY*

By Mary Popham

"Well, hello to you! My name is Jemima, Jemima Boone. I'm eleven years old. Well, I'm actually ten." Thus begins the story told by the spunky fourth child in the Daniel and Rebecca Boone family, as she relates the great adventures and numbing tragedy experienced by Kentucky's early settlers.

Rarely does an historical publication for children captivate an adult audience, as does Russell Lunsford's *Daniel Boone's Kentucky*. He speaks through the persona of Jemima, and you will fall in love with her.

"Daddy's a talker. Some say he takes after me," Jemima says as she describes her father. Handsome, with striking blue eyes, sandy, reddish hair worn in a club, and he has wide shoulders. He dresses in buckskin leggings, vest, and moccasins, a broadcloth shirt, and a floppy felt hat. His voice is soft, which comes in handy when tracking animals and dealing with people, especially Indians.

Of course, Jemima sees him as a god among men, and as we read of long, treacherous, and dangerous journeys filled with hardships, and the fear of death, we must agree. In August 1773, Daniel guides his wife, Rebecca, some of her Bryan family, his brother, Squire Boone and his wife and children, along with several others, to brave the trail through the Cumberland Gap. It is his dream and that of all the travelers to create new lives of freedom in a wilderness paradise. "The Iroquois called it Kantake, 'the meadow land.' We call it Kentucke."

This first journey through the mountains and woods, ends in tragedy. In 1773, the oldest of the children, sweet, kind James Boone is killed by Indians at Cumberland Gap while crossing the Clinch Mountains. Jemima's account of the men finding the mutilated bodies imparts the horror of the massacre. The family is devastated, yet Jemima wisely explains that the Indians held a belief of ownership in the rich hunting grounds. Although the native tribes had fought each other for thousands of years over who should hunt there, they had a particular disgust for white men, many of whom disrespected the natural law in the wilds. Some hunters killed animals only for their



skins, or just for the tongue and hump of the buffalo, leaving the rest to rot.

After the shock of the attack, the group decides to return to Clinch River and their homes along the Yadkin. Two years later, Daniel wants the family to make a second trip to Kentucky through the low gap in the Cumberland Mountains, and they are excited to go.

"Now listen carefully, 'cause I'm only going through it once for you." The bold and lively Jemima names the siblings that begin their journey to the fort at Boonesboro which Daniel has established. The young girl is now thirteen going on fourteen. She describes what goes on in a fort in the typical day of a woman, from thrashing clothes on a rock in the creek

bed, to chopping off the head of a chicken for supper, to loading guns for the men during Indian raids.

Jemima is one of three girls captured by Indians, and are rescued within days by her daddy, and other men, including Flanders Calloway, whom she marries. "Now, I'm not saying you should go and get yourself captured by an Indian raiding party so you can get yourself a man," she says. "I'm not saying that at all. But, you have to wonder."

Those who do not particularly care for historical novels will change their minds with this book. Reading Jemima's story, through deadly battles and joyous births, one is transported to that time and place.

The author is a retired counselor with the Commonwealth of Kentucky and a retired Chief Warrant Officer⁴ with the US Army and Army Reserve. His knowledge of history, attention to the language of the period, and his ability for captivating narrative, are indicative of exceptional talent. He includes map legends and a Boone family tree. Who knows? Some of us may find ourselves related to the Boones and Bryans of Kentucky's pioneer days. Regardless, this book is a keeper, to take its place on the shelf alongside treasured reference materials about our state's beginnings.



About the Book's Author

Russell Lunsford enjoys reading and is passionate about American history. He is a retired counselor with the Commonwealth of Kentucky and a retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 with the

US Army and Army Reserve. He and his wife, Janice, live on their farm in Adair County, Kentucky. They have three children and five wonderful grandchildren. Russell is also author of *Letters From A Captive Heart*, a historical fiction novel about the struggles, heartbreak and survival of Korean War POWs and their families. His Benjamin Nathan Tuggle-Adventurer series has two books: *Daniel Boone and the Settlement of Boonesborough, Kentucky* and *General George Washington and the American Revolution*.



About the Author of this Book Review

Mary Popham's fiction, nonfiction, poetry, essays, and book reviews have appeared in the *Courier-Journal*; *The Louisville Review*; *New Southerner*; *Appalachian Heritage*; and *Compass*.

She holds an MFA from Spalding University, edits fiction and non-fiction, presents programs on writing, and is the Events Coordinator of a Louisville writers' group, The Cherokee Roundtable. Her books include a short story collection, *Love is a Fireplace*; historical fiction, *Back Home in Landing Run*, and *The Wife Takes A Farmer*. The final in the trilogy, *Emmalene of Landing Run*, will be out soon. Her blog address is: mary-popham.wordpress.com.

1792 Map of Kentucky

