



0. EVIDENCE SUBMERGED IN LEGEND - Story Preface

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During the WPA's existence, as part of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, people were employed by the federal government to do all kinds of things. Ward Lockwood, an artist, was also an employee of the Works Progress Administration. In that capacity, he created a mural at the U.S. Post Office and U.S. Courthouse in Lexington, Kentucky. He called his mural "Daniel Boone's Arrival in Kentucky." Later, Carol M. Highsmith—a photographer—included this mural in the work she did to document places throughout the U.S. This image depicts Highsmith's photo. Credit: Photographs in the Carol M. Highsmith Archive, Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

Daniel Boone was crushed by this court martial. He never told his biographer about it. He did not discuss it. He knew that people continued to whisper about it—and that was deeply troubling to him. One year after the trial, Daniel left Boonesborough for good.

Capt. Callaway was very upset with the verdict, although he did not have to fret about it very long. He was dead less than two years later—massacred by Indians as he worked his fields with his slaves. He was scalped and mutilated. A contemporary witness, John Gass, reported that Callaway was "the worst barbecued man I ever saw."

After he left Boonesborough, Daniel and Rebecca eventually moved to Missouri. The Spanish governor gave him 850 acres of land where Boone and his son Nathan built a home. Boone was appointed to be a judge for the Femme Osage district (now St. Charles County).

When Daniel was 50 years old, the book that would make him famous was published by John Filson. Written in 1784, six years after the court-martial trial, it did not raise the subject.

Still, Boone's reaction to the charges which were brought against him comes through. "How," he must have wondered, "could anyone think I was on the side of the Shawnee when Indians killed two of my sons and one of my brothers?" According to Filson, Boone said:

My footsteps have often been marked with blood, and therefore I can truly subscribe to its original name. Two darling sons, and a brother, have I lost by savage hands, which have also taken from me forty valuable horses, and abundance of cattle.

Many dark and sleepless nights have I been a companion for owls, 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. But now the scene is changed: peace crowns the sylvan shade.

(*The Adventures of Colonel Daniel Boone*, by John Filson, at [page 11](#).)

Peace, indeed, did crown the last years of Daniel Boone's life. He lived to be 86 years old. A famous painting—made in 1819—was completed not long before he died in his Missouri home. Both Daniel and Rebecca were buried in Missouri.

Twenty-five years after his death, however, folks in Kentucky wanted him back. Overcoming the reluctance of the Boone family, officials disinterred both bodies and buried them again in a cemetery in Frankfort, Kentucky. At least—that's what most folks thought at the time.

Today it isn't clear who is really buried in Daniel's Kentucky grave. According to the Missouri version of the story, the grave that was meant for Daniel Boone—beside his wife Rebecca—was already occupied. Apparently he was laid to rest either at Rebecca's head or at her feet.

A 1983 study gives some credence to this claim. A forensic anthropologist studied a plaster cast of the skull in Daniel's Kentucky grave. He found the bones most likely belonged to someone else.

Turns out the old Indian's claim proved as true for Daniel in death as it did in life:

We have given you a fine land, but I believe you will have much trouble in settling it.

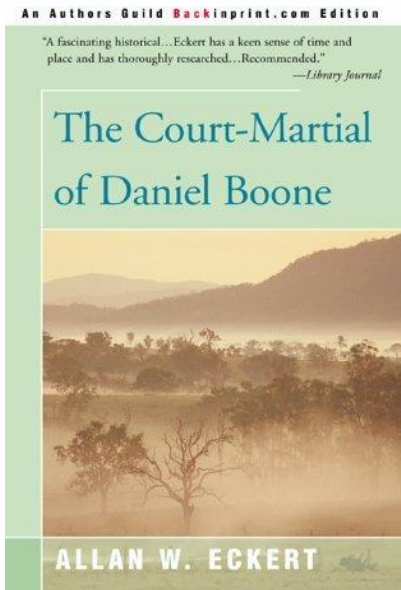
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/EVIDENCE-SUBMERGED-IN-LEGEND-Daniel-Boone>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/EVIDENCE-SUBMERGED-IN-LEGEND-Daniel-Boone>

Media Stream



Account of John Gass

Image of book cover online, courtesy Amazon.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Account-of-John-Gass>



Boone's Last Years

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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