

CHAPTER 02

TRAPPERS AND TRADERS BLAZE LONELY TRAILS

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(Transcribed by Dorothy Harlan)

Daniel Boone, Elderly Kentuckian, Lives Alone in a Tent One Winter Between 1797 and 1804 in the Present Howard County Bottoms, Later Building a Cabin at the Salt Springs That Give His Name to the Boon's Lick County--In 1807, His Sons Make There the First Salt Manufactured in Upper Louisiana and a Year Later Heath and Christie Operate Similarly in the Present Blackwater Township in Cooper County--Colonel Benjamin Cooper and Family Forsake Their Cabin Above Boon's Lick in 1809 After a Warning From Governor Meriwether Lewis of Impending Indian Uprisings.

WHILE the French still possessed Louisiana and *before Pierre Chouteau bargained with the Osages at Chouteau Springs* an elderly frontiersman often paddled the Missouri, hunting trapping and fishing. His name was to give permanent flavor to this section.

DANIEL BOONE lost through defective titles his considerable lands in Kentucky and obtained a grant on the *Femme Osage* in what is now St. Charles County. He located there in 1797.

For 23 years--until his death at 92 in 1820--St. Charles County was his home. He lived comfortably in a range of log cabins cared for by loving daughters and granddaughters.

Tall, straight, vigorous and ruddy, he wore buckskin, beaver and homespun. He was intelligent, tolerant, cheerful. His voice was soft and melodious. He was patient and kind, being free from the rancor that frequently comes with age or disappointment..

Although sociable, he frequently withdrew for long communion with nature. One winter between 1797 and 1804 he discovered salt springs about eight miles northwest of the site of New Franklin, and lived in a tent there most of the winter.

Later, it is said, he built a cabin. The place became known as Boon's Lick and in 1807 his sons, Nathan and Daniel M. Boone, manufactured salt there and floated it down the Missouri to market in St. Louis. This was believed to be the first salt manufactured in Upper Louisiana Territory.

DANIEL BOONE never resided in Cooper County although its capital bears his name. However, it is presumed that he frequently camped within its borders. In 1811 he returned to the *Femme Osage* with 60 beaver pelts and many other skins taken by his own skill. He was then 83 years old.

In 1800 during the time that Daniel Boone hunted frequently in this section, Joseph Marie, a Frenchman, was supposed to have settled in the Howard County bottoms in what is now Franklin township. There is some dispute about the authenticity of his settlement. Marie transferred lands in the area in 1816 to Asa Morgan who later platted Boonville.

THE COUNTRY from the mouth of the Osage river west to approximately what is now the Kansas line was known as the *Boon's Lick Country*, deriving its name from the salt springs in the present confines of Howard County and possibly from other licks discovered by Daniel Boone in what is now Boone County.

In 1808 John G. Heath and William Christie of St. Louis made salt in what is now Blackwater township in Cooper County. They returned each summer for several years and the place became known as Heath's Salt Lick, located on Heath's creek.

AFTER the Coopers cleared ground and built a cabin Governor Meriwether Lewis directed them to return east of the Gasconade river where he could protect them in event of Indian uprisings. They returned to Loutre Island, four miles below the mouth of the Gasconade, remaining there until 1810. *Loutre* is French for Otter. An early settlement of trappers was made there.

Thus ended the first authentic attempt to establish a permanent settlement in the Boon's Lick County. All previous sojourns had been purely transitory, the visitors mostly hunters and trappers. There were a few fur traders and an occasional adventurer.

In a sense they were trail-blazers and spies carrying back to civilization stories of fertile valleys, wooded hills, clear, cold springs and a climate appealing to peoples originating in western Europe. A climate not as rigorous

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as New England nor as languorous as the south appealed to the restless energy and driving ambition of Nordic races.

ASSURANCE of plenty of cheap, fertile land and a chance to grow up with the country newly acquired from France called up vivid prospects for wealth and adventure.

The urge to push the frontier ever westward was strong in the young America and there were increasing numbers of reports about the opportunities that awaited in the Boon's Lick Country.

A DESPERADO WHO RETURNED EVIL FOR GOOD

A BRAKEMAN on a Missouri Pacific freight ejected two tramps at Otterville at night, March 21, 1890. One took a pot shot at the "brakey".

The gun-toter, William E. West, was jailed in Sedalia for carrying a concealed weapon. A charge of felonious assault with a deadly weapon was filed in Cooper County.

In the Sedalia jail he met West Hensley, 19. They grew chummy.

"After they take me to Bonville, slip me a shooting-iron, and when I get out I'll give you \$300 and take you into partnership, and we'll clean up on banks and trains", the more mature youth exhorted.

WILLIAM E. WEST was personable. Sheriff Thomas Cranmer of Cooper County induced Cosgrove & Johnson to defend him. Cranmer also interceded. West got a light jail term on a plea of guilty.

On Friday night, June 13, Hensley climbed a ladder and slipped the pistol through the bars. Next evening Sheriff Cranmer, entering the cell-block, talked to West. While a trusty removed supper dishes, West, facing Cranmer, commanded: "Put 'em up!"

The Sheriff's right hand flashed to his hip. As he drew, West leaped through the cell door and fired--a blinding flash at close range.

UNSTEADILY the officer aimed and shot twice before the phantom gained the outer door unharmed. Painfully Cranmer locked the cell-block, walked weakly into his living quarters, reported the escape, and collapsed.

He was shot through the left arm, just above the wrist. The bullet entered the abdomen, passed through the left kidney, and lodged just beneath the skin.

A posse including Joe Green, William Koenig, Alex. Frost, John Thro and Frank Stover, all unarmed, surrounded West. W. W. Taliaferro, city marshal, and Frank Stretz, policeman, arrived. West surrendered and was back in jail within an hour.

Before Sheriff Cranmer died the following morning he requested there be no violence. At noon that Sabbath, a murmuring, gesticulating crowd assembled at Main and Morgan streets. The Reverend Dr. Broaddus eloquently urged respect for law and for the dead sheriff's wish. The mob melted away.

A night later the murderer confessed his real name, John O. Turlington. He had robbed a passenger train at Prior Creek, Indian Territory, assisted by his partner, one Temple, who, since the Otterville incident, had been sentenced to the Arkansas penitentiary.

Turlington had been in several jails and in two penitentiaries. He was then a fugitive from Tennessee state prison.

Found guilty on July 25, he was condemned to be hanged September 11, 1890. He appealed. Hensley was sentenced to prison for smuggling in the revolver.

LEAVING a dummy in his cell cot, Turlington escaped mysteriously while two guards were on duty. He was captured in Caseyville, Kentucky.

Christmas night he cut the top from his cell, climbed through a trap door in the roof, descended a rope and stole Sheriff A. Hornbeck's horse.

Turlington was recaptured that night by George Potter and John Hayner in the Thomas Cranmer orchard near Otterville.

On January 27, 1891, the supreme court sustained the decision of the lower tribunal. Turlington was hanged in the jail yard in Boonville on Friday morning, March 16, 1891.

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